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Encounter

edited by
Stephen Spender &
Melvin J. Lasky
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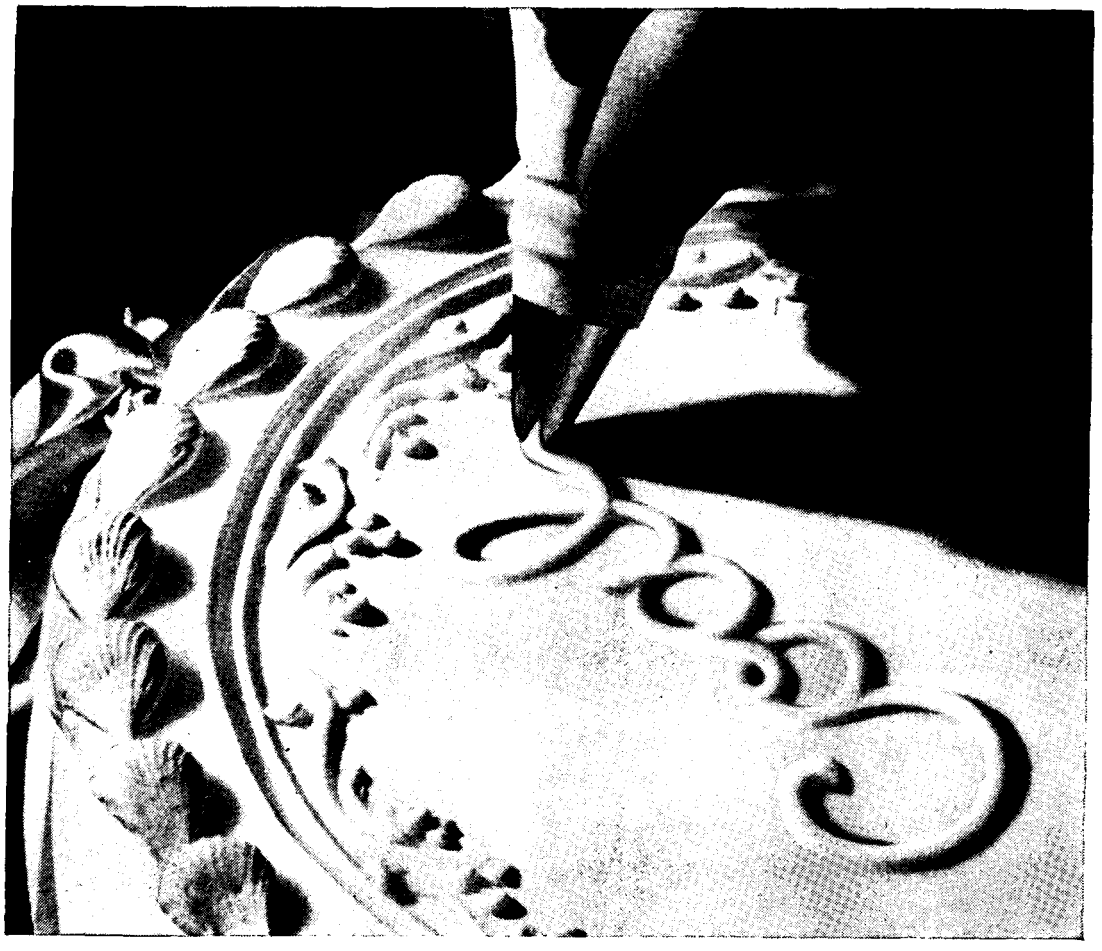

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Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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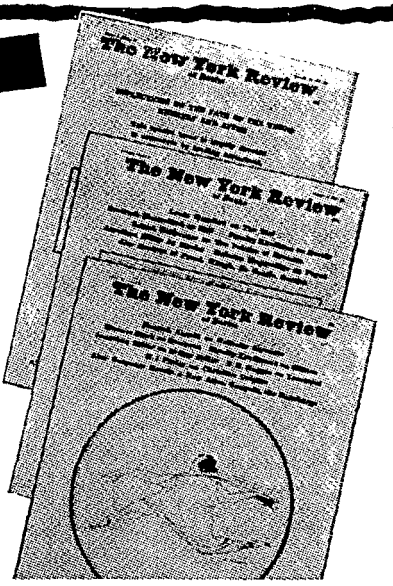

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Tibor Déry

Two Women

IN THE MORNING, before she pressed the bell of her mother-in-law's small cottage, Lucy stopped when she reached the front door, took the small round mirror out of her handbag, and checked whether her tears had smeared her black mascara. The mirror glinted in the sun, casting a dazzling beam of light which flashed back from her shining red hair. She scrutinised her face with narrowed eyes, with the passionate objectivity of a tracker dog; to be on the safe side, she put on some powder, and retraced the line of her lips with two swift light strokes; she would have resented even Irene, the old housekeeper, seeing her with a tear-stained face. From the open kitchen window came a smell of buttered toast, and this made her feel a little better. Still standing in front of the door, she "concentrated" for a few seconds more, then, with her customary gesture, scornfully shrugged her shoulders. Up till now—meaning the best part of a year—she had always managed to scrape through the mornings somehow.

To the left, next to the three stone steps of the entrance, the spirea already stood in bloom, spilling its sparkling white flowers like a cascading waterfall on to the narrow strip of lawn. Beyond the fence, four women stood gossiping in the highroad, and about a hundred yards further on, four geese stood motionless in the dust.

"The old lady got out of bed with her left foot today," said Irene.

Lucy planted a kiss on the red, round face of the old housekeeper. "Did she get up?" she exclaimed, laughing. "Has Christ come down and performed a miracle?"

The apple-cheeked housekeeper burst out laughing. The old lady, Lucy's ninety-six-year-old mother-in-law, had been laid low seven years ago with a kind of neuralgia; since then she got out of bed less and less frequently, and never before six in the afternoon, when—in a ratio directly corresponding to her waning strength—she walked the length of the room at first fifty times, then, slowly decreasing the daily quota, only about ten to fifteen times. She reduced it to ten in the last year, but had not fallen below that figure yet.

"She's been fuming ever since last night about not getting a new cover for her bed-pan. Have you brought any savoury biscuits?"

"Tons," said the young woman. "I've brought you some money for the housekeeping, too, Irene."

"Tons?"

Lucy laughed again; her laughter was irresistible, you couldn't help laughing with her. "Hell," she said. "I've brought you five hundred for the moment. Will that do?"

"That's more than we want this month," said the housekeeper.

The young woman opened her white, sack-like handbag, and started rummaging in it. It was not tidy; the few folded banknotes she had received this morning at the Commission Store for her old blue-fox stole lay crumpled at the very bottom, beneath the savoury biscuits, the little tray-cloth wrapped in tissue paper, under her lipstick, her purse and her mirror.

"One-two-three-four-five..." she counted, and her finely cut, mobile face, whose expressive features never quite came to rest, looked for a moment deeply serious while she counted the money. "Never mind, we'll settle it if there's any left. You don't have to stint yourself, old thing," she said, and was already laughing again. "Any other trouble?"

"None. Got any cash left for yourself?"

"To stuff pigs with," the young woman asserted. Into the clean, white kitchen where the gleaming whiteness was doubly increased by the glaring sunlight, the acacia, standing in front

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of the window, sent a bouquet of chokingly sweet fragrance that for a moment suppressed the aroma of hot buttered toast.

"Has the postman been?" the young woman asked.

"Not yet."

"Keep an eye on the letter-box, Irene dear; there will be a letter from America today," said Lucy. "I'd like her to read it while I'm here."

"Oh, she's ringing again," the housekeeper said. There were three or four short, impatient buzzes. "If she's rung for me once since breakfast, she's rung ten times. Her hand works as if it had an itch in it."

"Leave it, dear, I'll go," said Lucy.

STANDING IN THE doorway—the opening creak of which did not register with the slightly deaf old lady—Lucy contemplated the thin, pallid face that was framed by a black velvet bonnet tied with a ribbon under the chin. The head had sunk into the huge white pillows, the large, straight waxen nose protruding from the bony structure of the face, beneath the closed eyelids, seemed to foreshadow the death mask. Not a muscle moved under the light yellow eiderdown, not even the rising and falling of the chest was visible. The young woman had to "concentrate" hard again; her eyes were beginning to fill with tears. Fragile and athletic, she stood on the threshold, her head thrown back on the lovely, long stem of her neck as if the weight of her glorious russet hair were pulling it down toward the ground; her nostrils quivered, her small round belly tensed with excitement. "*Silly goose*!" she said to herself furiously in an effort to gain some strength once again. The sun shone from behind the enormous bed, on the narrow, white face lost between the billowing pillows, that was saved from extinction solely by the black velvet bonnet. The young woman pulled a wry face and impatiently stamped her foot.

The woman lying on the bed opened her eyes and looked towards the door.

"Good morning, Mother," Lucy called, her voice ringing light and gay once more.

"I rang so often, Irene," the old woman complained huskily, and knitting her brows, she looked towards the door again. "Is the buttered toast not ready yet?"

"It's me, Mother," Lucy called. "It will be ready in a minute."

The old woman cast another suspicious glance towards the door. "Who is?" she asked.

ALTHOUGH she had lived in Hungary for more than seventy years, the Austrian accent of her home town, Vienna, had not yet worn off. She spoke Hungarian fluently, but with a Germanic turn of phrase. A Hungarian word, misheard and stubbornly retained by her mind in the crooked way it registered it when she first arrived, occasionally slipped into her vocabulary and each time this irked her daughter-in-law to uncontrollable laughter. She still read German in preference to Hungarian, and in these last years that she had spent in bed, she had returned to the adored ideals of her youth; she read Goethe, Schiller, and sometimes —with slight boredom—a volume of Thomas Mann, and out of consideration to the country which offered her hospitality, the essays of the Hungarian Gyorgy Lukács on Goethe; these she annotated in her large, masculine Gothic handwriting with innumerable marginal notes and exclamation marks. Her own remarks—mainly quotations from the books read, which were interspersed with household accounts—she penned in a hardbacked ruled copy-book. The books—eight or ten volumes of them—the copy-book, one packet of sweet and one packet of savoury biscuits, as well as a box of chocolates of which she consumed one per day, were ranged in precise and predetermined order at the edge of the large bed, so that they were easily to hand, and so that it should not be necessary for her to ring for Irene if she wanted any of them. The wireless stood at the foot of the bed, tuned in to the Kossuth station, so that with the aid of a switch fixed to a long flex, put up for her by her son, she could operate it herself, and only had to call for the housekeeper when—according to the pre-marked programme —the Petöfi station supplied the composition required, and the set had to be switched over. But for the last few months this had happened less and less frequently; the old lady lay prone in her bed for the best part of the day with closed eyes, and it was impossible to tell whether she was dozing, turning over the memories of her youth in her still agile brain, or speculating on her all too brief future. She only came to life when Irene offered her some forbidden paprika potatoes from her own lunch, or when her daughter-in-law called in the morning.

"You—is it?" she said, grumbling, slightly lifting her head from the topmost lilac silk pillow. "Haf you bring me the little salt cakes?"

"Of course I have," laughed Lucy, and open-

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ing her sack-like handbag, she cautiously lifted out the little tissue-clad parcel. "And what else have I brought for you, Mother?"

"For surely, flowers," the old woman said discontentedly; her features however, smoothed out instantly and her eyes, her still lovely dark eyes, lit up with delight when they fell on the small bunch of gold pansies. "You will never learn to economise?"

Lucy stepped right in front of the bed, rolled her eyes up so that only the whites showed, and extending her forefinger, began to admonish the old woman with it. She kept it up until the latter started laughing.

"All right," she said. "I say the same thing every day because you makes every day the same thing. You not to bring me flowers every day. You to buy me tomorrow eau-de-cologne."

"And what else have I brought for Mother?" Lucy asked, diving into her handbag again. She poked around in it for a long while, watching the old woman intensely in the meantime. On the old face sudden senility appeared, the moronic reflection of credulous, open-mouthed infantile curiosity. Out of the dark cavity of the mouth glinted her one remaining tooth.

"Well, give it here," she said, losing her patience after a while. "Or have you got it lost?"

When she saw the little embroidered tray-cloth Lucy took out of the tissue paper she flushed with pleasure. She was demanding, but at the same time childishly grateful for the smallest service. "Is good," she said, "you now to bend down and to kiss me." She slightly lifted her head, and pursing her bloodless lips, clasped one of her bony hands on the full white neck of the young woman, drew her down and kissed her forehead noisily. "It's beautiful," she said. "But where from you take so much money?"

"I earn it, Mother," Lucy said cheerfully. "You know what a prodigious whore I am."

The old woman looked at her with round, uncomprehending eyes for a while, then suddenly started giggling, and lifted a threatening finger.

"Whore?" she said. "Ach, go away. I shall tell you to Janos when he comes home, and you will get two such big boxes on the ear." She turned her black-bonneted head towards the bedside table, and looked at the bed-pan standing on the lower shelf. "You to cover it up," she said. "It is lovely. It is high time too because in the afternoon comes Professor Hetenyi, and Irene will get excited and maybe will forget to put it away like the last time, and then here we are."

"The Professor's seen worse than that before," said Irene, appearing suddenly in the open doorway. "And anyway, what makes you think he'll come this afternoon?"

Wrinkling her forehead, the old lady looked towards the door. "She always eavesdrops," she whispered reproachfully to her daughter-in-law, but as her deaf ear could no longer censure the volume of her voice, her subdued hiss sounded as if she had bawled the old housekeeper out.

"Of course she wasn't eavesdropping," said Lucy quickly. "She's brought you the buttered toast."

"That I should be eavesdropping...."

Lucy winked at the old housekeeper like a conspirator.

"That I'm eavesdropping...."

Through the open window came a loud cackling of geese.

"That *I'm* eavesdropping...."

Lucy burst out laughing. "Don't have a stroke, Irene dear. If you go on like this I'm sure you will. Come on, let's have that toast."

"That is why the Professor comes today afternoon," said the old lady from the bed, angrily, towards the door, "because he was not here already for very long, for at least a month, and he has promised that he will come once every month...."

"He is coming this afternoon," said Lucy, teasing, "because Mother is in love with him, and is expecting him every afternoon; so that she can chat with him about Goethe—and she doesn't want the Professor to look at her bed-pan while they're talking, why, that's only natural, Irene dear, isn't it?"

"What do you say?" asked the old woman, blushing. "What do you say?" When it suited her, the old lady could go stone deaf in a second. "Why must you always so whisper so that one cannot hear one's own voice?" Lucy laughed outright, and the geese in front of the house started cackling again. "What do you say?"

The reason Professor Hetenyi had not been to the little cottage for so long was that he had died four months ago, but this was a secret closely guarded from the old woman, who was not able to keep count of the passage of earthly time any longer.

"It's no use denying it, Mother," said Lucy, "that you are in love with the Professor. Otherwise, for whom else would you learn all those quotations from Goethe by heart?"

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The old woman had in the meantime fitted her dentures into her mouth, and was now crunching the toast. "*Dumme Gans*," she said, "for whom . . .? for whom . . .? for myself. I'm eating the toast for myself too."

Lucy sat down in the little armchair next to the bed, that was upholstered in yellow silk. She crossed her legs. "Tell me, Mother," she said, "is the Professor really so witty when he speaks German?"

The old lady did not reply, but continued to munch her toast disdainfully.

"Well, he might be witty when he is talking German," went on Lucy. "Actually, he's quite sweet even when he chatters away in Hungarian. If only he weren't so ugly."

The old lady still did not notice that she was having her leg pulled. "Not everybody can be as beautiful as you," she said, and a slight flush spread over her forehead.

"Am I beautiful?" Lucy asked.

The old woman stopped pushing the food around in her mouth, and her old eyes, seasoned with the experience of nine decades, fastened attentively on her daughter-in-law's face, every sensual particle of which was bathed at this moment in the sunlight, and scent of acacias streaming in from the window.

"If only were you so clever," she said querulously after a time.

"As clever as whom?"

The old lady started rotating her food again and did not answer.

"As clever as the Professor?"

"*Dumme Gans*," said the old woman.

The young woman laughed cheerfully. "Oh, I nearly forgot, the Professor rang yesterday," she said. "He only came up for the day from Szeged so he couldn't come to see Mother, but he sends his respects. He says Mother will live for a hundred years, so not to worry, there will be many more times when they can see one another."

The old lady went on eating, but cast a suspicious glance at Lucy from the corner of her eye. "He told me too that I will live one hundred years," she muttered after a while. "Did he now say the same on the telephone to you?"

Resting her head on the sun-drenched back of the armchair, the young woman closed her eyes.

"You not now making a fool of me?" The old woman inquired.

Smiling with closed eyese, Lucy nodded.

"How? . . . What? You now a tricking me?" the old woman asked incredulously.

"Of course," said Lucy.

THE OLD LADY LOOKED at her with large naïve eyes, now she really did not know what to make of the professor's prediction. But whenever Lucy laughed, then—however put out she was—she ended up by laughing with her daughter-in-law, with quiet, perplexed chuckles at first, her bony austere face assuming an expression of fatuous simplicity—then more and more relaxedly, with more honesty and with the good-humoured realisation that she was laughing at her own expense—the tiny sting left in her brain only stabbing her memory hours later and sometimes only the next day.

"You are now really fibbing me?" she asserted gaily

Lucy jumped up, bent over the bed, and with her fresh young mouth planted kisses all over the hard old face trembling between the pillows.

"How can you think that I'm telling you a fib?" she exclaimed. "Haven't we worked it out a few days ago who is going to be still alive on Mother's hundredth birthday, and whom we can invite, and even what dress I am going to wear? We said my low cut, red silk one, don't you remember?"

"We haf not choose the white silk with the low cut?"

"Where is that by now?" sighed Lucy quietly.

"What have you say?"

"Nothing, Mother."

"All right," said the old lady. "Then you give me soda water now. Has to you the professor really said on the telephone that I will live one hundred year?"

WHILE LUCY was rearranging the crumpled pillows in the bed, and the old lady cautiously groaned from time to time from the remembrance of the neuralgia of seven years ago, Irene came into the room again, and with a jealous glance at the quick skilful hands of the young woman, removed the little wooden tray with the empty glass and plate on it.

"Aren't all these books a nuisance for you, Mother?" asked Lucy, smoothing the eiderdown. "You can only read one at a time!"

"But I am reflecting on the others," the old woman said severely. "You not to touch those ones either. Have you learn the German lesson?"

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As she did not receive any reply for quite a while, she turned her narrow head towards the young woman, fixing her with a reproachful gaze. The gaze became a stare, losing its focus and purpose, and lasted for so long that it seemed to have lost all relation to subject and object alike, and was now glimmering on its own with aimless radiance, like an orb in the ether. Then, suddenly, it became affiliated with the earthly world again.

"What is Janos going to say," she said accusingly, "when he comes home and you not speak German yet?"

"Janos. . . . Janos. . . ." Lucy mumbled. "He'll be lucky if I haven't forgotten Hungarian by then."

The old woman looked at her again, "What do you say?"

"I'm tired of Janos," muttered Lucy, but of course the old woman caught that. "I'm tired of Janos," Lucy repeated slightly louder to make sure she would be heard. "How is it that whenever one mentions Janos you always hear it, however quietly one speaks, Mother? I'm sick of your son, Mother."

"You are now fibbing me again?" the old woman asked, her mouth slightly twisted by laughter.

"Of course," said Lucy.

The old lady didn't know what to say. But her eyes, resting on the face of her daughter-in-law, were so anguished and so guileless that Lucy could not bear it for long; she raised her head and smiled. Immediately and gratefully the old woman smiled back.

"Tell me, Mother," Lucy inquired, "how was that when once you were staying at Savanyukut?"

The old woman reflected, "Savanyukut. . . ."

"Yes," said Lucy, "you know, when the whole family had to sleep in one room."

"And?"

"Oh, you know," said Lucy, "when you all had to sleep in one room and your other son was peeping."

"Poor Gyuri? You did not know him any more."

"Yeah," said Lucy, "I mean Gyuri. When in the evening you had to get undressed, Mother, and told the children to turn towards the wall."

"Ach," said the old woman. "I haf told you about that before."

Lucy smiled at her again. "But I don't remember it very well. When was it?"

"Ach, very long ago," the old lady sighed. "Maybe it is fifty years."

"More than that," said Lucy. "How old are you now, Mother?"

"Ninety-six," said the old lady proudly.

"There you are!" Lucy exclaimed triumphantly, "and when you were at Savanyukut, and could only get a single room for the night, you were still quite a young woman, weren't you? That must have been at least sixty years ago."

"Sixty?" the old woman mused. "Then was I thirty-six?"

"Just about," said Lucy. "Now tell me, how was it with that spying?"

"Well, what happened..." the old lady started, then stopped abruptly, and shot an uncertain glance at her daughter-in-law. "But I haf told you that already."

"But if I don't remember it very well," complained Lucy. "I only remember that it was evening and the children were already in bed, and that you wanted to undress. Mother, you must have been very beautiful as a young woman."

"Yes, I was very beautiful," said the old woman simply. "You know, at that time became fashionable those big hats that you had to tie down with those silk or velvet ribbons... how do you say... under your chinbone, and my husband, he gave me as a present such a very wide moiré ribbon, and when I tied that down under my chin every young man turned round after me in the street."

"I'm sure they did," said Lucy, "and not only the young ones either. Professor Hetenyi would have turned round too if he had known Mother at that time."

The old lady smiled modestly. "Oh, go away," she said, suddenly sternly, "maybe the professor was not even alive then."

"Maybe," said Lucy, "anyway, what happened then?"

"When?"

"Well, about the spying?"

The old woman ran her bony finger over her black bonnet. "Do you know," she said reminiscently, "that this bonnet has been made from that very wide ribbon that my husband gave me then?"

"But this is velvet, Mother!" Lucy laughed merrily. "And you received a silk moiré ribbon."

"Never mind," said the old woman, flushing. "Maybe that one was velvet. Well, what you want to know?"

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"Well, Mother," Lucy said, "what I would like to know is how you undressed that time at Savanyukut."

"Everybody had to sleep in one room," the old woman began, and her voice sounded slightly muffled from crossing the crippling distance of sixty years in the dimension of time; even her eyes lost some of their lustre. "What happened was that everybody had to sleep in one room and the children were already lying in their beds, and I wanted myself to undress. Do you know, all the ladies wore corsets in those days, long corsets from here to here, and that my man had to lace it up, and that I haf not wanted the children to see. Oh," she said impatiently, "I haf told you all this before."

"But if I don't remember it, Mother," Lucy said. "All I remember is that you told the children to turn towards the wall."

The old lady nodded distractedly. "I told them."

"And when you started to undress, you looked behind you to make sure that the children really had turned to the wall."

"Yes," said the old lady, "I stood there in my petticoat."

"Sorry, not in a petticoat," interrupted Lucy, with lips twitching with laughter, "but in pants, in long pants, down to your ankles with lace at the bottom."

The old lady laughed too. "Yes, in pants."

"And when you turned to look, you saw that Janos was honourably turned towards the wall, but your younger son...."

The old lady burst into laughter again. "Yes, Gyuri was espionaging."

"Yes, he was espionaging," said Lucy. "He was lying on his tummy and he was ogling Mother with one eye."

"He had long golden hair," the old woman said softly, "lovely, long golden locks and he was espionaging from behind them into the room."

"And then?"

"What then?"

"Then what happened?"

The old lady did not reply.

"Oh, do go on, Mother," said Lucy, "because I don't remember all of it. You put a large towel over the side of the cot...."

"Of course, I did put one over it," the old woman said vaguely.

Lucy giggled. "And then you saw from the mirror that Gyuri was lifting the corner of the towel and peeping from behind it."

"Yes, he was peeping," said the old lady, and in order to be able to laugh more comfortably, took her dentures out of her mouth, and placed them in the glass of water standing on her bedside table. "He was peeping out and grinning off his head."

"While Janos...."

The old woman suddenly glowed with the memory. "While Janos?'" she said quietly; "he just lay there, turned towards the wall and did not move."

"He was very scrupulous even as a little boy, wasn't he, Mother?" asked Lucy, watching the old woman closely.

"Yes," said the latter, very slowly and decisively. "He is a very honourable man."

She closed her eyes and there was silence in the sunlit room, broken eventually by the deep hooting of a horn that came from outside the window. The old lady opened her eyes again, and fixed them on Lucy. "*Dumme Gans*," she said loudly and deliberately, "you belief that I do not see that you remember better than I? Yes, he was all that scrupulous even as a child—is that what you wanted to hear?"

"Like hell I did," Lucy said quietly, but the old lady did not hear it. She was watching a wasp that was circling above the little bunch of pansies that stood on the bedside table; craning her neck, she was watching it with her head turned sideways, then—forgetting her neuralgia—she propped herself up on her elbow, and, popping her spectacles on her nose, her mouth half opened with rapt attention.

"You love Janos?" she asked hoarsely, after a while. Exhausted, she sank back on her pillow and took her glasses off.

"Like hell I do," said Lucy.

The old lady knitted her brows with disapproval. "All right, you not to fib me now," she said huskily, "because I now was speaking in earnest. If you love Janos you tell him when he comes back from America that he should not be so obstinate."

"Why, Mother?" Lucy asked with interest.

The old lady did not answer. She was staring into space, her mouth half opening again with inward excitement. "Never mind," she said. "You just tell him that."

"But why, Mother?" asked Lucy again.

Again the old woman made no reply. She lifted her head a little, tried to include in her vision the wasp droning above the pansies,

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observed it a little while, and then let her head fall back on to her lilac pillow.

"Once I was watching such a wasp," she said in a muffled voice, "that was buzzing too like this one above such yellow pansies, then sat down on one and because it was very heavy the pansy quickly turned her head and bent deep to the ground. You know, if it had not bent down then perhaps its . . . what you call it—stem would have broke."

"Is that what I am to tell Janos?" asked Lucy.

"Yes," said the old lady.

"It's too late," muttered Lucy.

"What do you say?"

"I haven't said anything."

"You don't have to," said the old lady. "You just tell him that."

"Why don't you say it to him, Mother?"

The old lady lifted a hand, and let it fall wearily. "It will be a very long time before he comes home," she said, staring fixedly into space again.

Fortunately Irene came into the room again; her pleasant round face shone as if clad in its Sunday best; even her white hair sparkled in the sunlight. The old lady spied the letter she was holding at once. She sat up, opened her mouth, but no words came.

"There is a letter for you," said Irene, winking at Lucy.

The old lady took a deep breath. "From Janos?"

"How should I know?" said Irene, coming up to the bed. "I haven't read it."

But this time the old lady was not to be taken in by the indifference of the tone; as if an earthquake had shaken and transformed her whole being within the space of a second, her eyes dilated, and the cavities of her long bony face filled out, colour crept into her cheeks, and her breast was heaving under the light yellow eiderdown. The weight of the excitement brought her soul up to the surface, into the pupils of her eyes, her colourless nails, her scanty, electrified white hair. She extended both her trembling hands; with one she grabbed the letter, with the other she clasped the old housekeeper's neck, pulled her head down and kissed her. She felt so faint that it was minutes before she could open the envelope, tear the letter out of it, and smooth out the typewritten pages. "Give here the magnifying glass, Irene," she said, panting.

She put her spectacles on, and holding the magnifying glass in her shaky hand, stopping from time to time as if she was out of breath, then, with a deep sigh, starting again, she read the four closely typed pages which for the next week she was going to take out every day and read, from the first letter to the last, over and over again.

"THIS TIME I'll try to make up for my short letter, although I have even less time than before because . . . and this is the great news . . . I'm just putting the finishing touches to my film, in another month it will be ready and then I shall come home. This is the news I wanted to tell you first to compensate for the long wait you had. The first night of the film will be a month from to-day in a New York film theatre which holds thirty thousand people. It is just being built on the outskirts of the city on top of a high mountain and has to be completed for the first night because they want to open it with my film. From the roof you can see half of America down to the Cordilleras and the Andes, not to speak of the Atlantic Ocean which is just as blue here as the Adriatic at Abbazia where we were together one summer. The theatre is going to have an airport of its own because all the rich people from all over the States will be coming here, flying their own aeroplanes, and from the city, meaning New York, there will be a special helicopter service for the audience, costing one dollar per head. They are preparing great festivities for the first night, but I'll come back to that later; first I want to reassure you that in spite of all the work I'm in the best of health and very happy about being able to return home soon, and although I work 10 to 12 hours a day I reserve one hour every day for sport because I don't want to get fat. I box, fly a plane, walk and swim. Of course, you will ask, where do I swim? In my own swimming pool in the park. That's a story for itself.

"You know, Mother, that until recently, I stayed in the largest hotel of the United States, the Waldorf Astoria; I had a suite of twenty rooms on the hundredth floor from which again you could see about half of America. But I had to keep so big a staff, about six secretaries and a dozen typists and so on, that there wasn't enough room for us all although in the end I had beds put up even in the reception rooms, in bunks like the ones you saw on your honeymoon! However, the reporters who kept coming from all parts of the world pestered me so much that we decided to move out and keep our address secret. So, about a thousand miles from

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New York, we rented a XVI-century castle, every stone of which was imported from France separately, and rebuilt here, of course with every modern comfort, in the middle of a hundred-acre park that has several swimming pools and an airport as well. The house is air-conditioned, and now we have enough space because the castle has so many rooms that even my black valet and my hairdresser have a suite of their own, and my groom a small cottage next to the stable. Oh, I forgot to tell you, Mother, that I go for an hour's ride every morning before breakfast, I have a lovely white mare called Darling, and I canter away on her leaving even my secretaries behind. At these times I'm followed only by the six secret police officers detailed for my safety by the film company, but they ride a hundred paces behind me. If we should have anything to do in New York we can fly there in less than an hour in our own red-white-green jet plane, and can get back before lunch, because, as you know, Mother, I insist on my afternoon siesta, so I can be fresh and rested for work in the evening. *My address is secret, so I can't tell even you, Mother, please give your letters to Lucy as before, and she will send them to my old address, the Waldorf.*

"All these distinctions I've been overwhelmed with are most embarrassing; I only write about them because I know they please you, Mother, and this will make up to a small degree for the distance that separates us. Still, this will come to an end soon, and I shall be home again. Unfortunately, I'm unable to send anything of real value to you, Mother, for the moment, as I shall only receive my salary after the film is finished, and anyway, you would have to pay too much duty at home. So, for the time being, you will have to content yourself with the bits and pieces I can send through Lucy. But I have already earmarked a large silver-grey luxury Ford for you; I shall bring it home myself, as well as a radiogram with a thousand records and a superb wireless on which you can even get the North Pole. (Although they don't play Beethoven there!) For Irene I'm going to buy a little five- or six-roomed villa somewhere in the neighbourhood, but I'm not telling anyone what I have for Lucy. There is a large brown bear here in the garden, about twice as big as Irene; we are very fond of each other, so maybe they'll sell him to me—although I have no idea where we could keep him at home. He looks rather like that big bear we saw together in Vienna when you took me to the Zoo in Schoenbrunn when I was ten. Do you remember? And the same evening we went to see Offenbach's *Helen of Troy*, and I laughed so loud during the performance out of sheer joy that the whole audience was looking at me—do you remember that too?

"Oh, I still owe you the description of the festivities they are planning for the first night. Don't speak too much about them, because they are partly a diplomatic secret. I don't suppose I need to tell you that all the radio and television companies of the States are going to arrange for a live transmission so that at least fifty million people will see the film. They are expecting one or two hundred reporters, and the best-known radio commentators, amongst them the world-famous Mr. Smith, and of course the representatives of the European Press and radio companies are going to be present too. Pity Budapest won't be able to receive the transmissions.

"They have invited a lot of celebrities in my honour. I'm saying that just to please you, Mother, not to boast. Mrs. Roosevelt, the widow of the late President, has undertaken the chairmanship of the festivities, and invited her friend, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, who has accepted the invitation. The President of the French Republic is also coming with his whole family, and representing the Queen of England will be her son, the Prince of Wales, whom you, Mother, will no doubt remember. He was in Budapest once and rather liked our apricot brandy. The foreign minister of the Soviet Union is coming and Hungary will be represented by the Minister of Culture; the German Chancellor and the King of Greece are coming—the only thing they are wondering about now is whether or not to invite Franco. The Maharaja of Jaipur has accepted, and is bringing his whole court with him, also his favourite white elephant, who of course cannot be dragged up to the mountain, so they will have to build him a separate stable at the foot of it, all of white marble and air-conditioned, and also some cottages for the elephant-keepers. The elephant has a pure gold saddle studded with pearls and precious stones. . . ."

BY THE TIME the old lady finished the letter, reaction to her excitement set in, and she fell asleep quite suddenly. It was possible to talk freely now for if she did not see lips moving, she did not register voices, even if they spoke next to her ear. She slept quietly,

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without a sound, her bony face transformed by the magic in happiness. While she was still on the whole in full possession of her senses, and occasionally—as far as her naïve disposition permitted—even capable of suspicion, she was quite prepared to believe the most fantastic things of her son; his talent, his strength, his courage, his genius, all were beyond question.

Irene giggled. "Again she didn't notice that the letter was posted in Budapest," she said.

Lucy jumped up from her chair, went to the window, and from behind the bed, so that she should not even see it in her dream, stuck out her tongue at the old woman.

"What did you write?"

"A lot," said Lucy. "I laid it on thick."

"She won't talk about it to-day," said the housekeeper, "but to-morrow she'll ring for me at dawn."

"Well, why shouldn't you have some fun too?"

They were both silent. The sun climbing to its zenith had left the room, the old lady's face was now in shadow. Only the mirror of the large wardrobe standing at the far end of the room reflected the sun's rays, the bevelled edges dissecting it to the seven colours of the rainbow, and throwing a trembling veil of coloured light on to the wall. Above the bunch of pansies, the wasps hummed sleepily.

"You won't be able to stand this much longer," said Irene, looking with compassion at the young woman.

"Like hell I won't," said Lucy.

"Well—not for ten years."

"He's done one," said Lucy, "there are only nine left."

Irene nodded. "The old lady won't live that long."

"No," said Lucy, "but as long as she lives, I want her to have everything."

"Professor Hetenyi promised her she'll live to be a hundred. That's four more years."

"Possibly," said Lucy. "Come over here, Irene dear, and have a look how lovely her face still is from this angle.'

The old woman slept so soundly and so happily that Lucy decided she would not wait for her to wake up. But before she had reached the door, the old lady behind her opened her eyes. "Where are you going?"

Lucy turned round, laughing. "I was going to hop it, Mother."

The old lady said nothing; she looked at the flexible, slim figure of her daughter-in-law for a long time. She lifted her head a little, and smiled gently.

"How lovely your red hair looks in the sun," she said. "Like an English Princess."

Lucy flushed. "Well! Is it really lovely, Mother?"

"Really," the old lady said. She nodded a few more times, then called Lucy to her. "Will you kiss me, please? No, not there, on my forehead. I want you to. You are very lovely and very good."

"Well, really!" said Lucy.

"There's something I want to ask," the old lady went on. "Why must my son Janos have secret police by him in America?"

Lucy swallowed hard; her eyelids began to flutter.

"Well, every famous person is surrounded by secret police in America, Mother."

"All right," said the old woman, relieved. "Is good." Suddenly she laughed in a thin old voice. "Do you want one bear? One very big bear so big as two Irenes. *Mein Gott*, what an idea—only he can have an idea like that." She laughed until the tears came to her eyes. "Now you go," she said, suddenly impatient. "To-morrow I will tell you the letter."

Bu Lucy had hardly reached the door before she called her back.

"Now," she said, "you nearly forgot to pull out the hairs on my chin, and this afternoon Professor Hetenyi is coming. You please take the tweezers out from my drawer. And the new bedjacket because Irene will not give it to me. You to put it on me, please. You see," she said proudly, while looking at her bare arm, "you see how it is nicely smooth, there is no wrinkle in it only where I bend, here by the elbow."

"The young ones have wrinkles there too, Mother," said Lucy.

The old woman looked at her.

II

THAT MORNING Lucy arrived at her mother-in-law's cottage later than usual. Opposite the door four geese were cackling in the sun-flecked sand—the four women already had gone home to cook the midday meal.

The door was opened by the white-haired, square-set housekeeper. She did not allow the visitor to enter at once; she planted herself in front of Lucy, and with her small sharp eyes set in her round apple face she scrutinised the young woman's features for a long time.

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"Well, aren't you going to let me in?" Lucy asked, laughing.

"What's wrong?" asked Irene, blocking the doorway.

"Nothing," said Lucy. "Why should there be anything wrong? Aren't you going to let me in?"

The old housekeeper did not move from the doorway.

"There is nothing wrong—why should there be?" Lucy repeated.

"Why didn't you bring any flowers, then?" she asked.

Lucy laughed. "Aren't you sharp! I didn't have time. Well, let me in, blow it. I'm late as it is."

"You didn't have time?"

In the clean white kitchen, where the gleaming whiteness of the furniture was enhanced by the blazing sunlight, the jasmine, from the edge of the lawn, sent a bouquet of chokingly sweet fragrance. Turning her head from side to side, Lucy sniffed the air. "I can't smell any buttered toast," she said. "Has she eaten it by now?"

"Ages ago."

"Is it that late?"

"Nearly midday," the housekeeper said.

"Irene dear, go and pinch yesterday's flowers out of the vase," said Lucy, "and bring them out here. I had no time to buy any to-day."

"Are you broke?" the housekeeper asked.

Lucy did not reply. "Look, just pinch yesterday's flowers," she said, "and give me some tissue paper to wrap round the stems. What sort of flowers did I bring yesterday?"

The housekeeper shook her head. "I can't pinch them because if she never notices anything else, she'll notice if the flowers are missing, sure enough. You brought white carnations."

"Bring them out," said Lucy. "I'll put some lipstick on them."

Irene laughed. "Would you like a glass of brandy?"

"Yes."

Irene went to the kitchen cabinet and opened it. On the lower shelf of the top part which was edged with a white doyley strip, the soup-bowls, meat plates and dessert plates shone in separate groups, the last group a little lower than the rest. The meat, vegetable, salad and sweet dishes were piled upon one another according to size, the great urn-shaped soup tureen was in the far corner. They were all decorated with a narrow gold band which glinted in the sun.

"She broke another dessert plate yesterday," the housekeeper said, while from amongst the glasses, cups and saucers on the top shelf she took a lead crystal liqueur glass and filled it with brandy.

"What's the matter?" she asked as, turning round with the full glass in her hand, she saw that Lucy, her head resting on her arms on the kitchen table, was crying soundlessly. "I knew. . . ."

Annoyed, the young woman threw her head back. "What did you know? Tell me, what did you know?"

The old housekeeper watched her silently.

"Well, is it surprising if I cry," sniffed Lucy, "if they break my inheritance to pieces? That's the fourth dessert plate that's missing. Or did she leave the china to you?"

"She did," said the housekeeper quickly and decidedly. "And the silver too. What's wrong?"

"Nothing."

"No money?"

"I made seventy-four forints last week by dyeing nylons," she said. From her white handbag she took her handkerchief, powder, lipstick and mirror, and threw them down on the table in front of her. There were a few specks of powder on the mirror, which she wiped off with her handkerchief, and then raised it to her face; with the heart-breaking intensity of the eternal struggle for existence she examined each feature with infinite care. Moving the mirror from side to side, she smoothed her greasy eyelids with the tip of her forefinger, sucked her lips in and pressed the upper lip to the lower a few times. Then, wetting her forefinger she passed it once or twice over her eyebrows. Creation, without which there is neither life nor death, had been completed. Looking into the mirror once more, she cast a last glance at her heavy russet hair; this was Sunday.

"I only had to work two days and two nights for it," she said, the last tremors of creation reverberating in her voice.

The housekeeper pulled up the little kitchen stool where—under the worn paint—the texture of the wood was beginning to show through, and sat down next to her. "I could lend you some," she said. "My husband got his wages yesterday."

"Go to bloody . . ." said Lucy. "The hairdresser offered me eight hundred forints for my hair only last week—that should do for two months' rent as it is."

"Is there no news?"

"None. My mother-in-law?"

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"She was asleep when I looked in a few minutes ago."

Lucy's eyes filled with tears again. She could not even put up any resistance to herself any more—she was finished.

"What's the matter with you?" Irene asked.

"Nothing. I'm jittery. Leave me alone."

"Got your period?"

Lucy laughed suddenly. "Sure. That's the least of my worries."

"Well, what then?"

"The bailiff has been again," the young woman said. "Came at nine and plagued me till eleven."

"But he's already collared everything."

"No."

"What d'you mean?"

"I mean he hasn't confiscated everything."

The old housekeeper folded her hands in her lap. The geese broke into a frightened cackle in front of the house.

"As soon as he left," went on Lucy, "the family of the concierge came up, all three of them, father, mother and the little girl, and sang Verdi's *Requiem* for me."

"What?"

"Nothing. I'm playing the fool," said Lucy.

The housekeeper stood up, then sat down again.

"When I was a little girl," said Lucy, knitting her brows, "I once got lice at the convent in Majsa. The Mother Superior ordered my hair to be shorn off completely, and it took a year until it grew anyway near half way respectable again. In that year I felt more or less as I feel now."

The housekeeper was silent.

"Funny," said Lucy, "I just remembered, the Mother Superior came from Vienna too. And I was often hurt because she always spoke German with Lilla Bulyovsky and I didn't understand it."

"She made you bald? Cut off all your lovely red hair?"

"She cut it off because it was red," Lucy said. "And the next day my mother went to the convent with a whip, and had to be forcibly restrained from horse-whipping the Mother Superior."

"I thought the bailiff had laid his filthy hand on everything by now?" the housekeeper said after a while.

"He hasn't," said the young woman obstinately."

"Well, what did he leave?"

Lucy made an impatient gesture and bumped her elbow on the table. "No!" she cried in fright, "I don't want an unexpected guest! I don't want any unexpected guests!" Snatching at her elbow with her hand, she pulled the unexpected guest out of it, and turning her palm outwards, scattered him into the four winds. "I've had quite enough of them as it is. He hasn't dispossessed me of my furniture yet."

"Of course not," said Irene.

The young woman shook her head with annoyance. "Why, 'of course'?" she asked. "Because I had all the old bills and notes of delivery and with those I could prove conclusively that the furniture belongs to me and not to Janos. Janos had hardly enough furniture for one room—he didn't even have a decent bed when he married me."

"I know," nodded the housekeeper.

"And now the Ministry has sent Mr. Kulinka along to confiscate everything, and I'm supposed to reclaim whatever belongs to me," said Lucy with tears in her eyes. "He was just spitting noughts all over the place—five thousand, ten thousand, another ten thousand—it was no use begging him and telling him that they would restore the things to me anyway, and would he mind valuing them slightly lower, as I won't be able to cope with the stamp duty. He looked at me mournfully, for he was so sorry for me he nearly cried, then bawled out: one neo-baroque wardrobe twenty thousand."

"Twenty thousand," repeated the housekeeper, shaking her head.

"What are you groaning about?" asked Lucy. "It's worth it. I'd get that much for it if I sold it any day. But I won't sell it, not if it kills me —I want Janos to find everything as he left it."

The housekeeper glued her eyes on the ground.

"Stop bawling," shouted Lucy irritably. "What the hell are you bawling about? Just like Mr. Kulinka. We won't frisk you personally, he cried with tears absolutely flooding his eyes, but we'll search every cupboard.... Irene dear, find me that old French soap-box we saved."

"Did you bring her some soap?" asked Irene, going towards the kitchen cabinet.

"Yeah... and find that empty Czech chocolate-box for me too, that nice red one," said Lucy, while taking a tablet of soap and a bag of sweets from her handbag.

"She's still got the old ones untouched."

"Well, let her have some more," sneered Lucy. "Her beloved son Janos is sending them

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to her from America," she said sarcastically, while pouring the sweets from the paper bag on to the table, and putting them one by one into the red chocolate-box. She laughed again.

"What's up?" asked Irene.

"Nothing. I'm laughing at myself."

The bell buzzed three or four times in quick succession. The housekeeper looked at Lucy. "Are you going?"

"Not yet. I'll get my breath back first," said Lucy.

"Don't you want to lie down for a quarter of an hour in my room?"

"What for?" asked Lucy. "I'll lie down after lunch anyway, and won't even bother to get up till to-morrow morning. I'm out of work again."

"Why don't you go to the pictures for once?" Irene asked after a while.

"What for? I laugh enough about myself as it is."

THE BELL rang again. Since the time, about a month ago, when during one of her walks along the room, the old lady fainted, fell and broke her ankle, she had become even more neurotic and crotchety than before her accident. Sometimes she rang for Irene three or four times in quick succession; at other times she did not touch the bell for days; she lay in bed without moving, her foot in plaster, her eyes closed, neither reading nor switching on the wireless; the only reason one knew she was awake was that she opened her eyes immediately someone entered the room. At these times the mirror of her eyes was not clouded by the unconsciousness of sleep but by the weariness of a greater distance that drained the hue of life from her waxen skin and allowed the uncontrolled glands at the corner of her mouth to discharge their saliva. She did not speak at once at these times like dozing old people usually do who, like defenceless beasts, want to deny having been asleep, and do so with immediate and loud protestations; she inspected the fact that swam into her vision with a long and penetrating gaze as if trying to decide what strange unknown world it came from. She usually made some small deprecating gesture so as to wave away the unwelcome guest. Since breaking her ankle she could not get up in the afternoon and, although not in pain, and unaware that her ankle was broken—she thought it only sprained—the quarter of an hour taken from her daily programme upset her whole routine and disrupted her small but steady universe. In place of the dead Professor Hetenyi—who was supposed to be furthering his studies in the Soviet Union—a new doctor had to be introduced to the scene and this too contributed to her feeling of insecurity. Although she liked the new doctor, Dr. Illes, at sight as, for some unknown reason, through some unfathomable channels of the nervous system, he evoked the memory of her son Janos; the stranger intruding on her horizon still disturbed the groove her life had been running in for years now. Naturally, Dr. Illes spoke German well and had an extensive knowledge of the great German classics—they would not have dared to bring the old lady a doctor who did not—apart from this he had a very nice tenor voice, and sometimes sang in concerts; this was something not even Professor Hetenyi could do. Equally naturally, Dr. Illes, following the example of his predecessor, shared, without any reservation, the old lady's admiration for her son.

"Is that you, Irene?" the old woman's voice came from the bedroom.

Lucy jumped up and tiptoed to the door to listen. She moved with the same grace when she was alone as when she was in company, even if only in her mother-in-law's company, who did not see very well now. Her face, complementing her body, acted as well—she grimaced, raised her eyebrows, wrinkled her forehead, smiled at herself as if to a second person who would watch, observe, and appreciate all this. Incidentally, her ears were so finely tuned that she could just as well have stayed in the kitchen, and would still have heard every word from upstairs.

"It is you, Irene?"

"Well, who else?" asked the housekeeper. "You rang."

"Come nearer, Irene dear, I do see your face not," said the old woman suspiciously. "I have rang?"

"Twice."

"I remember not," the old woman said. "Do you not know what I wanted?"

"I'm supposed to know that as well," muttered the housekeeper. "You wanted me to ask me what the time was."

"All right," said the old woman. "Tell me what is the time?"

"Nearly midday."

"Nearly midday," repeated the old woman pensively. "Did I not want anything else?"

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"You wanted to ask me what I'm having for lunch."

"What are you having?"

"What's left over from yesterday's braised beef with potatoes and tomato sauce."

"Phew!" said the old woman. "I do not want that one. No noodles with cabbage?"

Irene shook her head.

"Pity," said the old woman disappointedly. "That Professor Hetenyi has strictly forbidden, but I always eat up by the spoonful. Tell me what time it is?"

"Midday."

"I know... midday," said the old woman. "But then why did not the young lady come yet?"

This was what Lucy wanted to hear; she grinned contentedly. It seemed the old lady wanted her after all, if for nothing else, to talk about her son. She ran back to the kitchen, snatched up her handbag, had a last look in the mirror, and then ran back to the room.

"Good morning, Mother," she called loudly.

"Is it you?" said the old lady, bad-temperedly. "Why do you come so late? Irene says it's midday already."

"I wrote a long letter to Janos, Mother," said Lucy. "I took it out to the airport so it should go to-day."

"*Ja,*" said the old woman.

"What have I brought for Mother?" Lucy sang.

"Flowers, for sure," said the old woman. "You never learn to economise. What flowers they are?"

"White carnations."

The old woman turned her head towards the bedside table where she could not see yesterday's white carnations. She looked back uncertainly to the vase in Lucy's hand.

"I put them in quickly with the others," Lucy said. "They wilted a bit on the long journey. And what else have I brought for Mother?" she went on quickly, with distracting tactics. But the old woman did not look towards the handbag; she was still staring at the white carnations. "What else have I brought for Mother?" Lucy repeated more loudly.

The old lady looked at the presents with indifference. "Is good," she said. "French soap? Janos sent it? It smells very nice. You to give it Irene she will put it away. The sweets too. You to write to Janos he should not now send any more because there is now enough."

"Oh, let him send some," said Lucy. "There is never enough of these. Why shouldn't he send any?"

"Because he should economise," said the old woman wearily. "He cannot economise either. What will happen to you, my child, if you will never learn to economise, not you, not he? One day you will be old."

"Never, Mother," Lucy laughed. "Not while there is lipstick and make-up on the market."

The old woman closed her eyes. "I thought it was already afternoon," she complained, "and that you already gone to home. And it is only midday and I still have to eat that miserable dinner."

Suddenly she sat up and, forgetting her neuralgia, leaned out of bed, fixing the dark rays of her dimming eyes on her daughter-in-law's face.

"Come nearer here, my child," she said.

"Yes, Mother."

"Nearer," said the old woman. "More nearer! Tell me, my child, the truth—when is he coming home?"

"Who?" asked Lucy, frightened.

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME in a year that the old woman allowed her doubts to rise to the surface, and admitted openly even to herself that she had them. It had happened before that she had lost patience and grumbled that her son should leave her alone for so long, but she never doubted his veracity that in a month's time, or in three months, he would come home, and when that time was up (of which, with her faulty sense of arithmetic she could not keep track anyway), and her son had not yet arrived, then, with a mother's implicit faith, with unquestioning credulity she believed without any doubt that her son was busy and accepted the new time almost at once. This was the first time that she openly rebelled.

"You tell me the truth," she repeated quietly but obstinately. She put her glasses on and, bending even nearer to Lucy's face, she bore her dark eyes into those of the young woman. "When is he coming home?"

"Well, in his last letter he said that in three months he will definitely have completed his work. One month is now up," said Lucy.

The old woman suddenly fell back on her pillows, and in a thin, old voice, began to cry. The tears dropped one by one from her open eyes, ran down her narrow, bony face—which remained undistorted by their touch—flowed down her chin and under the ribbon of the

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black velvet bonnet. Lucy had known her mother-in-law for several years, but she had never seen her cry, not even in 'fifty-six when the shells nearly ripped the roof from over their heads and the two women stuck it out alone for days in the vibrating room because Irene was with her husband at the other end of the town and did not dare come home. They had no news of Janos for a week then. The old woman was lying more or less helplessly in bed even then, but not a muscle moved in her set face at the sound of the detonations—true, she was hard of hearing even then—and all day long she kept telling stories to Lucy about her own youth, about Janos, and made Lucy tell of her own childhood which she spent in the country.

"Please don't cry, Mother," said Lucy, whose heart had stopped in terror for a moment. "Two months is not such a very long time."

"I won't live that long," the old woman said between the two rows of tears which were falling from her eyes. "I won't live till then."

"Oh, Mother, what are you talking about?" Lucy cried with all her strength. "Professor Hetenyi said you will live for a hundred years."

"What do you say?"

"Professor Hetenyi said that...."

The old woman turned her tear-stained face towards her daughter-in-law. She did not speak, but stared with her guileless, leaden eyes at Lucy's face for a while, then lifted her hand—and let it fall again.

"That's at least four more years," cried Lucy.

The old woman looked at the ceiling again. "Ach—go away," she said. "Maybe Professor Hetenyi is dead as well."

There was complete silence in the room for a second; only the faint sound of whimpering came from the pillows. "All right, Mother," Lucy said with sudden decision, "I'll write to Janos and tell him to come home."

"What do you say?" asked the old woman after a few seconds.

"I'll write to Janos and tell him to come home at once," repeated Lucy in a louder voice.

"When?"

"To-day."

Looking at Lucy again, the old woman said, "I don't ask that. I ask when he should come home?"

"At once!" cried Lucy. "You are perfectly right, Mother, he's been knocking around America long enough. I'm sick of it too."

The old woman's tears ceased, and a deep sigh escaped her. "That he should come home at once?" she asked dubiously, as if not believing her tears.

"I'll tell him," said Lucy, bending over the bed, "that if he hasn't finished that goddam picture by now, he may as well leave it and come home. You're absolutely right, Mother, I'm not prepared to wait any longer either."

"That he should leave the film?"

"Don't worry, Mother," said Lucy, "if I tell him to come home or else I'll divorce him, he'll be home in no time."

"You divorce him?"

"And how!" Lucy said. "Well, tell me, Mother, is it fair to leave a woman alone for that long? Everyone else would have been unfaithful to him by now except me.... Well, what the hell does he take me for?"

"That he should leave the film?" the old woman said again with trembling lips. "Before the first night?"

"Damn the first night!" said Lucy. "He can stuff his first night. I don't want his dollars. He'd better come home before I run out on him."

The old woman sat up. "What you say? That you will run out from Janos?"

"To hell with his dollars," said Lucy. "I know he won't get a cent if he doesn't finish the picture and that he slaved away for nothing for heaven knows how long, but I don't care. I'm not going to stew here on my own any longer."

The old woman sat up quite straight. "If Janos comes home now then he will not get one dollar?"

"Of course not," said Lucy furiously, watching the old woman from the corner of her eye in the meantime. "So what? I don't want his money. You're quite right, Mother, I'll send him a wire to-day to come home at once."

The old woman was silent. Then, "*Dumme Gans*," she said suddenly, her forehead flushing with anger. "And then he has made the whole work for nothing?"

"Made it for nothing," said Lucy, "so what? Work isn't the only thing in life. He's got a wife and an adored mother as well."

"*Dumme Gans!*" the old women repeated, getting more and more red in the face. "For man the most important thing is his work. You cannot wear on your conscience that Janos did not finish the film. Do you not know that also the Queen of Holland wants to see?"

Lucy shook her head. "I don't care, I'm going to wire him to-day. You are absolutely right, Mother."

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"I'm not right," screeched the old woman angrily. "You being very stupid. Just because I whine a little bit you do not have to already tear your hair. You shall not write him anything at all."

"I'm not writing, I'm sending a telegram," said Lucy. "Who is more important, Mother, you or the Queen of Holland?"

"That I forbid that you should telegram," said the old woman. Her convulsed face, which the unusual anguish emaciated to even more angular dimensions, loomed for a moment gauntly and threateningly into Lucy's. But the next instant an almost incredible transformation took place; the face softened with affectionate tenderness, and she smiled at Lucy with all the captivating charm and wisdom of her ninety-odd years.

"You listen to me, my child," she said. "I know what is hurting you. I know you feel jealous for Janos. But I know my son, you be quite sure. My son is like I am, he is faithful to the people he loves. It can happen that he will have one or two affairs in America with women —will have one or two affairs in Europe too, because I had an affair once myself—but in the end my son will tell every woman: Out! You do not have to telegram to him. My son will live to the end of his life with you."

FORTUNATELY the bell rang at that moment. Dr. Illes, the new doctor, looked in at the old woman for a quarter of an hour's therapeutic talk. The old woman—by some mysterious process of the mind, she associated the doctor with her son—was very fond of him, and grumbled at him incessantly. The more she grumbled the more she liked him. Her tear-stained worn face lit up instantly as she now saw him at her bedside. He was a doctor, that was reason enough for deference; the old lady acclaimed science with all the superstitious veneration of the 19th century; but apart from that, the six-foot tall, broad-shouldered young man, with the intelligent smile, appealed to her still sensitive feminine heart through his masculine charm. His balding head reminded her of Janos, his classical literary education—although it could not compete with Professor Hetenyi's—evoked memories of her own girlhood and beaux. They spattered each other with quotations like playful children bathing in a river, who splash water into each other's faces.

There was only one thing the old lady could not bear with equanimity, and that was the fact that Dr. Illes occasionally sang in church at the Sunday Service at the church of the Inner City, or at Ascension Day at the church of Kristina Square.

"Well, have you been singing in the church again, Doctor?" she asked petulantly, fixing her tired eyes on the doctor's kindly face. "Do you know that I have not been in church for ninety years?"

"Not once?" asked the doctor. "Not even on your wedding day?"

"Not even then," said the old lady. "Only to look at pictures, when my husband took me to honeymoon in France. But I do not understand well the pictures so I mainly just walked around in the church and I looked at the kneeling people praying and I thought, *O, les pauvres!*"

The old housekeeper who was standing in the doorway behind the doctor, secretly made the sign of the cross.

"I was ten or twelve years old," said the old woman, "and I have a new dress from my Mamma because next day we wanted to make excursion to the *Wiener Wald*. In the evening I prayed for long to God that he should make fine weather so that we can go for excursion and I can wear my new dress. And then next day it rained. Then I was very angry with God."

"And you are still angry, Mother?" asked Lucy.

The old woman slowly turned her eyes towards Lucy. "I said, my child, that I got very angry then. And the next day when my Mamma wanted to take me to church in the morning, I said No."

"And you didn't go?"

"My Mamma, she was a clever woman," said the old lady. "She waited until next Sunday when there was sunshine and we could go for excursion and I could wear my new dress and was very happy. And then she asked, Are you coming to church again now, Stina?"

The doctor laughed and patted the old woman's hand, which he had been holding all the time. "And Stina was clever too, was she?"

The old woman smiled. "My Mamma asked: Stina, are you coming to church now? And again I said: No."

For a few seconds there was silence in the room. The sun was shining from behind the bed, highlighting the gaunt face moulded of skin and bone.

"I said to my Mamma," the old lady went on, slightly out of breath, "I said, No. I said

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I will not ask for help from no one in this world whom you cannot trust. I want to walk on my own feet and head."

"Well, that you've achieved," said Lucy in an aside.

"What do you say?" the old woman asked.

"I said, Mother," Lucy shouted, "that you've most certainly achieved that."

The old woman shook her head. "I don't know....I don't know if I achieved. Since I become so old—since then I'm so lonely and helpless. But when I die," she said, "then only my son will hold my hand." She looked at Lucy again. "Not even you....I will not want you then either," she said slowly with a long, penetrating stare at the young woman's face. "The beasts, they want to be alone when they die. If my son cannot be with me and cannot hold my hand then, then I want to be on my own."

Her strength exhausted, she suddenly closed her eyes. The various events of the day had evidently tired her; she withdrew her hand from the doctor's and tucked it under the eider-down next to the still dependable warmth of her own body. Out of tact for her visitors, she did not turn towards the wall, but pretended deafness, or, maybe, by auto-suggestion, became temporarily deaf, and did not reply to any more questions. But when Lucy, following the doctor, wanted to tiptoe out of the room, the old lady lifted her head from her lilac pillow and called her daughter-in-law back.

"Lucy," she said, clearly and intelligibly, "you please to stay with me a little longer."

Lucy floundered. The old lady hardly ever used her Christian name. "Of course, Mother," she said. "I'm only seeing Doctor Illes out."

"Thank you," said the old lady, "but afterwards you come back?"

"Of course I'll come back," said Lucy. "We haven't seen much of each other to-day."

Despite her tiredness the old lady kept Lucy with her for a long time. She shared her lunch with her while she herself only ate a few morsels —Irene too offered some of her own tomato sauce and braised beef. Lucy ate with such a good appetite and obvious enjoyment, transforming the food so quickly into energy, gaiety, and jokes, that the gastric juices of the other two women began to work at a more healthy rate. They too seemed to thrive on what Lucy put away.

"Is it good?" the old woman asked.

"First-class," said Lucy.

"The tomato sauce as well?"

"Absolutely. If only I liked it!"

"You don't like tomato sauce?"

"Loathe it," said Lucy.

When they had finished the black coffee which the old lady had ordered specially for her guest, Lucy had to undo her waist-length red hair and comb it in front of the bed before the large, silver-framed mirror of the dressing-table. The sun rose and shone directly into the room now, on to the mirror, the white arm that rose and fell in front of it combing the Titian red hair with a large ivory comb, coaxing electric sparks invisibly out of its long glittering strands and scattering them into the room. The old woman looked for a while hungrily at the young, slender neck, the white shoulders gleaming in the sun, drank in the healthy fragrance of the mass of lustrous hair—then suddenly she had had enough, and became weary.

"I thank you, now you go home," she said, almost as soon as Lucy had put the last pin into her hair.

THE NEXT DAY the young woman arrived an hour earlier than usual. She rang and started hammering at the door with her two fists. "Irene," she shouted, still outside the door, "Irene! I've got a letter, a letter, a letter...." She fell round the housekeeper's neck and laughing loudly, happily, she turned her round and waltzed along the narrow little hall. She was so excited that her teeth chattered audibly while she danced.

"From your husband?" Irene asked.

"He's alive!" the young woman panted. "It's quite sure now that he is alive. I can go and visit him Sunday week. It was not a letter that came only, but a printed permission form saying that I can go and visit him next Sunday. If he is permitted visitors, then he must be in good health."

Irene did not answer, but the young woman was so happy that she did not notice.

"Even if he isn't in good health, at least he's alive. That much is certain."

"The old lady is very unwell," Irene said after a time.

Lucy sat down on the kitchen stool. Now she noticed the traces of a sleepless night on the old housekeeper's apple cheeks, the shadows under the eyes, the puffed lids. "What happened?" she asked.

"Well, in the middle of the night I woke up

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—you know how lightly I sleep—because I heard talking in her room. So I went in and she was talking to herself, but much louder than she usually does; she was even shouting and quarrelling with her son. At dawn my husband went to phone the doctor, because by then her cheeks were bright red."

"Pneumonia?"

After the onset of the illness the old lady did not lose consciousness for three more days, but, like a poet, by this time she was only concerned with herself. Out of courtesy, and self-discipline, she made an effort to conceal that she had no interest in anything in the world any more —the last honour her disciplined pride paid to the world of the living—but her efforts were not very successful. She could not hide her indifference very well; the people round her found out soon enough the polite trick she was trying to play.

The inflammation first attacked the left lung, and when they succeeded in subduing it there, the right one; then it spread to both lungs again. While she was conscious the old lady—when she believed herself to be alone—sometimes kept up long monologues, mainly about the small inconveniences of her helpless state. As at the onset of pneumonia the bladder stopped working, she felt very ashamed about having a nurse come twice a day to draw off her water. Later, she became unconscious, and did not speak at all. Lucy wanted to hire a full-time nurse but Irene was having none of it. "What for—so I can look after her too?" she asked. "Anyway, how do I know what she is going to take out of the cupboard when she is alone in the room?" Apart from this, while she was able to speak or thought speaking worthwhile, the old lady herself protested against the constant presence of a stranger. The first time she spoke was on the afternoon of the third day, during the doctor's visit.

She looked at the visitors, Lucy and the doctor, with clear open eyes, but did not return their greeting, and when they sat down by her bed, she kept her eyes fixed on the door as if expecting someone else who was certain to come. Even later, in her unconscious state she kept this posture; when they straightened her pillows and placed her narrow, black-bonneted head on the topmost one, the next instant she turned it towards the door, craning her neck, and whether her eyes were open or closed, her whole blind body was listening to a sound from that direction. In the last days she even brought her right hand from under the warmth of her eiderdown, and, twisting her wrist, at a queer angle placed her palm under her chin. If Lucy cautiously eased it out of its contorted position and put it back under the eiderdown, the old lady, stubborn even in unconsciousness, slid it out the next moment and wedged it under her chin again. Otherwise she lay as quiet and motionless as a dry leaf in the sunny dust, her breath could neither be seen nor heard, her legs were stretched out one next to the other, the one in plaster touching the other waxen foot. She did not complain even during her unconsciousness; she neither sighed nor groaned; the only time she uttered a little plaintive whimper, so unbefitting to her severe and austere life—was when she was turned on her side so that the doctor, who now came twice a day, could examine her lungs, or the little sores on her back caused by the long stay in bed, could be dusted with talcum powder. She submitted to the injections without a sound; the hypodermic needle only touched the topmost layer of her mortal form.

But on this last afternon of her conscious life, she did not reply any more to the doctor's questions or to Lucy's endearments, compressing her lips and fixing her, for the moment, still clear eyes on the door, she remained obstinately silent.

"I might be able to keep her alive for two or three more days," the doctor said to Lucy after the examination. "Is there any hope . . . ?

"None."

"What is your wish?" asked the doctor, looking out of the window to the sunflecked lawn and beyond it to the dusty road.

"Whatever is better for her."

"It's all the same for her."

"Whatever is better," said Lucy.

"She does not feel anything by now," the doctor said. "Within a few hours she'll probably lose consciousness. With caffeine, and strofaine, I can keep her heart going for a few more days. Is there any hope for . . . ?"

"No," said Lucy.

"What is your wish?"

"Whatever is best for her."

After the injection, Lucy went out with the doctor into the hall. They had hardly reached it when the bell rang. This was the first time the old lady used the bell since she had had pneumonia.

"Mother, Mother darling," Lucy whispered,

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bending over the bed. The doctor was waiting in the hall. The old lady went on looking at the door but clung to Lucy's arm with her hand.

"I did not tell you, my child," she said in a queer muffled voice, "about the last letter of my son. Do you know he is going to get the Kossuth Prize?"

"He didn't write to me about it yet," said Lucy.

The old woman, keeping her eyes on the door. "He is going to get it," she said. "Now you get out and send me in the doctor."

The doctor came in and bent over the bed. "Do you know, singing doctor," said the old lady, still keeping her eyes on the door, but with her mouth twisting into an ironic grimace, "do you know, singing doctor, that my son is going to get the Kossuth Prize?"

"Wonderful," said the doctor, "wonderful."

The old woman nodded again. "Is going to get," she said. "It is a secret not but you tell Lucy, my daughter-in-law, that she should be proud of my son."

"Wonderful," said the doctor again.

"Now you go on singing," said the old lady.

After the doctor had left, Lucy sat down in the kitchen with Irene. Her lips were trembling so badly that it was a long time before she could speak. Irene poured her a glass of brandy, put it in front of her and left the bottle out. Lucy put her shaking fingers to the stem of the glass. "Now what am I going to tell him on next Sunday's visit?" she asked.

The Strawberry Plant

THE rootless strawberry plant
Moves across the soil. It hops
Six inches. Has no single location,
Or root.
You cannot point to its origin,
Or parent. It shoots out
A pipe, and one more plant
Consolidates its ground.
It puts out crude petals, loosely met.
As if the business of flowering
Were to be got over. Their period is brief.
Even then, the fruit is green,
Swart, hairy. Its petals invite tearing
And are gone quickly,
As if they had been. The fruit swells,
Reddens, becomes succulent.
Propagation through the devouring
Appetite of another.
Is sweet, seeded, untruculent;
Slugs like it, all over.
It is nubile to the lips,
And survives even them. And teeth,
Insane with edible fury,
Of the loving kind.

Jon Silkin

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Robert Graves

Mammon

Remarks of a Poet about Money

ECONOMISTS study the science of money, and maybe they should be reminded once in a while of certain poetic and religious imponderables without which economics make no sense—or no more than do the logistical war-games played by budding generals at Staff Colleges, which disregard such unlogistical factors in real warfare as morale, weather, accident and miracle.

Let me start with the etymology of "money." A word's first meaning is the usual poetic approach to its subsequent history. *Money* comes from *moneta*, a Roman surname of the goddess Juno, whose temple housed the Republican mint. *Moneta*, translated from the Greek *Mnemosyne* ("mental concentration," or "an act of memory"), was applied to Juno in the sense that oaths to pay so many coins of approved weight and metallic fineness for land, goods or services, were sworn in her name before witnesses. Thus *moneta*, meaning "approved coin," gradually superseded *pecunia*, or "cattle," the old-fashioned Latin for "money": cows having been the common standard of exchange (as they still are in parts of Africa) until abandoned because of the obvious variation in value between individual cows.

An approved coinage is the jumping-off point for the study of economic and political science; but let me go back farther in ancient history, to the idea of "barter"; and beyond that to the idea of obligatory gift-exchanges; and beyond that, to the still purer idea of unconditional gift. What we now call "finance" is, I hold, an intellectual perversion of what began as warm human love. To be brief: money can be redeemed from the Biblical curse put on "filthy lucre" only by reviving in it the lost sense of a love-gift—which, of course, is most children's first introduction to money, when a kind uncle presses sixpence into their little palms. But, as I hope to show, this cannot be done except in a strictly anarchic context.

THERE ARE TWO primitive kinds of love: the love of a mother for her brood, and the mutual love of courting couples. Both kinds vary greatly throughout Nature, but seem strongest among birds and primates. Good mothers provide titbits for their brood even if they go hungry themselves; courting couples offer each other not only titbits, but flowers and toys—the bower-bird and the penguin are ready bird-examples—in proof of affection. A mother's impartial distribution of food starts a companionship between her children which often outlasts their need of it, so that they form packs, flocks or herds. Young monkey kinsfolk behave very well towards each other, even caring for the sick.

Primitive man, however, took co-operation a good deal further than monkeys: making, it seems, a study of insect life—as *Proverbs* enjoins the sluggard to go to the ant (and, in the original text, also to the bee) consider their ways, and be wise. Indeed, the bee was a well-known metaphor for the queenmother of matriarchal societies. Anthropologists have noted an insectival type of communism among Australian aborigines and the Tierra del Fuegans, who do not understand private property and share all food and other booty without stint. Members of a clan are united by perfect loyalty based both on reciprocal trust and—this is important—on common mistrust, or hatred, of outsiders; even though (as anthropological field-workers agree) such loyalty is consistent with an active dislike between individual clansmen.

Elsewhere, courtship-giving becomes a metaphor for alliances between clans: each clan agreeing to supply the other with a particular product or products. The right of connubium usually seals these bargains and assures a harmonious interdependence between clans. So far, we have not left the love area, but when more gift-products get amassed than are needed, and can be safely stored, these encourage multilateral

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treaties. They also encourage the rise of mercantile clans who dispose of the various surpluses to outsiders. Finally, weights and measures regularise trade; and metal in ingot form is accepted as an all-purpose medium for buying and selling. Thus maternal love and courtship habits are extended, by metaphor, to loyalty inside a clan, to friendship between clans, and to good business relations between foreigners. If this were the whole history of money, how pleasant our world would be, and how simple the science of economics!

AT THIS STAGE, however, a certain awkwardness arises: caused by the unnatural concept of fatherhood and the entry of male gods into religion, where hitherto the Goddess has reigned supreme. Now, the father is an unimportant figure in most natural species; often not averse to eating his own infant young, and always neglecting the survivors' education. Among birds, however, the cock is sometimes decently domesticated and helps in nest-building: the pious eider-drake, when the eider-duck has lined their nest with her breast feathers but they have been stolen to make eider-downs, will denude his own breast of its rather second-rate plumage to keep her eggs warm through an Arctic spring. Yet the cock-cuckoo—a bird-disguise which Father Zeus adopted before seducing the goddess Hera and claiming universal sovereignty—never does a claw-stroke of work.

It seems to have been late in pre-history that women's need of fertilisation before child-bearing was discovered by men, who thereupon began calling themselves "fathers." Their jealousy of sexual rivals was sharpened by watching fights between rams and bulls for the lordship of a herd. Patriarchy is, indeed, a phenomenon associated with cattle-owning nomads who worship Bull-gods or Ram-gods. Once cattlemen claim ownership of women and their offspring, this leads to frequent fraticidal combat between would-be patriarchs, and to raids on peaceful matriarchal territory. Pastoral tribes are, as a rule, better organised for warfare than agricultural ones; and the plunder carried off tempts them to further conquests. Their disdain of the matriarchs whose land they occupy is justified by another natural analogy: woman as no more than the furrow where proud man sows his seed. In many matriarchal or matrilineal societies, a boy old enough to leave his mother's hut goes to that of her brother. In patriarchal tribes, the father claims him and he is cruelly initiated into the arts of rapine and murder. Thus fear of the father displaces love of the mother as a fundamental religious formula. The Latin word *patruus*, "paternal uncle," always connoted severity at Rome, as it still does in patriarchal Spain where popularly *tio* (uncle) means a harsh and difficult character; whereas *avunculus*, "maternal uncle," carried a sense of ponderous but genuine kindness—perhaps because he felt no legal obligation to educate and support his nephew if left an orphan.

WHEN THE ANCIENT metaphor of maternal love, that could bind communities together by free exchange of gifts, was challenged, the contagion of patriarchal severity and greed spread everywhere. As men of the Late-Christian Era, we inherit our ambiguous attitude towards money from the Jews, whom this problem always troubled. Israel was a nation composed of two warring strains—Goddess-loving Canaanite agriculturists and God-fearing Aramean pastoralists who first subdued them under Abraham. The Aramean god El was bull-headed. However, the native cult proved too popular for suppression, even after Joshua's conquests several centuries later, and the Goddess continued in power both at Shechem and Jerusalem. It was only when the Judaean monarchy neared its end that the prophets' novel and bizarre doctrine of a wise and loving *Father* who had deposed the lustful and irresponsible *Mother*, allowed the nation to resolve its religious conflict in theory at least.[1]

The Israelites had not been a mercantile people, except during the brief period of King Solomon's alliance with the Phoenicians; but, according to *Genesis* and the early historical books, they used gold ingots of fixed weight as the price of land. Thus Abraham paid the Hittites four Carchemish *minae* for his burial cave at Machpelah, and Jacob paid one *mina* for his plot at Shechem. If drought, pestilence or Midianite raiders forced a man to restock his farm with borrowed money, kinsmen of either party witnessed the weighing of the ingots, and such contracts were never afterwards disputed.

[1] In West African matrilineal societies where a son reckons his descent back to at least 14 or 15 ancestries of his mother, and has no legal ties to his father, there is, in fact, a deep and socially irrelevant affection found between father and son; and his mother's brother, the *avunculus*, becomes the severe *tio*.

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But little love was shown in these deals. The lender took a pledge for his loan, either in land or goods, and though a limit had been set on the transfer of fields containing ancestral tombs —and therefore inalienable—a poor borrower could offer his person as a pledge and, in default of repayment, become the lender's bondman. Nevertheless, in order to keep Israel a country of small independent farms, rather than of *latifundia* worked by serf labour, the *Book of Leviticus* ruled that lands sold in this manner must revert freely to the original owner or his heirs in the "Year of Jubilee," which came round every half-century; and that all bondmen should be released after seven years' service. The regulation did not, of course, apply to Canaanites: their perpetual serfdom being authorised by Noah's curse on his grandson Canaan, who had mischievously castrated him.

ONE OF THE LAST Jewish monarchs, King Josiah, published the *Book of Deuteronomy* as a merciful amendment of the earlier four books of the *Pentateuch*: Shaphan the Scribe attributing it to Moses. Lenders were now restrained from taking household necessities as pledges, or even from choosing alternative pledges, and forbidden to demand any interest on their loans; also, all debts were wiped out every seven years—these being reckoned not from the date of the contract, but from the most recent "Year of Release." The law assumed a degree of generosity unnatural in lenders who did not happen to be relatives, or on terms of close friendship with their borrowers. Both Josiah and Shaphan must have realised its impracticability, for Israel is enjoined: "Beware that there be not a base thought in thine heart, saying: 'The seventh year, the Year of Release, is at hand'; beware lest thine eye be evil against thy needy brother, and thou lend him naught!"

Babylonian captivity and Seleucid rule then brought the Jews into close contact with prevailing ethics, after which the richer citizens showed no inclination to make interest-free loans unless they could be certain of reimbursement. Since David (if it was David) said in a Psalm that though an old man, he had never seen the righteous forsaken nor his children left to beg bread, this implied that the poor were poor either as a result of idleness or in punishment of inherited sins.

Nevertheless, shortly before Israel became absorbed by Rome, the Messianic Pharisees reasserted the prophetic doctrine of God's loving-kindness and man's duty to his neighbour; and in such emphatic terms that by the reign of the Hasmonean Queen Alexandra they had gained control of the legislature—successfully opposing the Sadducee priesthood who rejected all liberal readings of the Mosaic Law, and interpreting the savager passages of the first four books in humane terms. This movement indeed grew so strong that left-wing fanatics founded celibate communistic settlements beside the Dead Sea—women being naturally scornful of benevolent patriarchy—and cut themselves off from the rest of the nation.

OTHER FANATICS, who held that celibacy contravened God's first Commandment "Increase and multiply!", formed brotherhoods at Bethany, Emmaus, Damascus, and elsewhere, sending out missionary groups to preach the gospel of mercy and repentance. One of these groups—that led by Jesus of Nazareth—attained world-wide fame. Yet Jesus did not repudiate money as a social convenience, but paid the Sanctuary tax demanded of him, named Judas of Cherioth the company treasurer, and distinguished "the Mammon of Unrighteousness" (meaning wealth won by financial craft) from "the Mammon of Righteousness" (meaning wealth won by honest toil or trade). This was orthodox Pharisee dogma, based on Scripture—namely, that money in itself could be neither good nor evil, since it had been used both for selling Joseph into servitude, and for buying the Temple site on Mount Zion. Jesus' reported words "You cannot serve both God and Mammon," were short for: "You cannot serve both God and the Mammon of Unrighteousness." He preached against the Sadducee priesthood who, though forbidden by Deuteronomic Law from distraining on a widow's garment for debt, would (in Job's words) not shrink from claiming her ox or her house, and leaving her to starve. His Sermon on the Mount, reinforced by the parable of Dives and Lazarus, showered blessings on the honest poor, and curses on the dishonest rich.

The Pharisees tried to prevent impoverished Jews from asking foreigners for loans at interest, by introducing the *prosbul*—a saving clause that enabled a creditor to demand payment of a loan at any chosen period before the next "Year of Release." But this clause, sponsored by Hillel, was not enough to keep the poor from becoming poorer, or the rich richer. Jesus desired to re-

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clothe Mammon in garments of love, by contrasting the generous master who forgave his servant a huge debt, with the same servant who seized his fellow-servant by the throat in a dispute about a far smaller sum. He also warned the disciples to think no more about tomorrow's subsistence than birds did; and answered the rich young Jew who had kept the Law meticulously and wanted some assurance of Salvation: "One thing is wanting: sell all that thou hast and give to the poor!" An unrealistic injunction, because the earnest young man must have felt himself responsible for his dependants' livelihood, and to scatter gold at random among the city mob might have prompted crimes of violence. Jesus' words should therefore be read as his ironical reproof of the young man's sanctimoniousness; and perhaps also as a plea for help—since he and his disciples were themselves deserving poor.

THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND of their three years' missionary wanderings is seldom considered by theologians. When the ill-paid Roman legions occupied Asia Minor and Syria, rich men were bled; but poor men, skinned. Banditry, blackmail, and squalor abounded. The cost of living in the Protectorate of Judaea and the small Native State of Galilee must have been excessive. Everything was taxed separately: houses, land, fruit-trees, cattle, carts, fishing boats, market produce, salt. The Romans had also imposed a poll-tax, a road-tax, a tax on exports and imports. Worse: they farmed these taxes out to financiers; who sub-leased them to contractors; who had to buy police protection. Most of the disciples were working men with families. While on the road, their annual out-of-pocket expenses—apart even from alms given to beggars—cannot have been less than the equivalent of three or four thousand pounds sterling. Surprisingly, St. Luke mentions among their moneyed backers Susanna, wife of Chusa, chief finance minister to the Tetrarch of Galilee—in fact, to Herod Antipas, who had beheaded John the Baptist, and against whom Jesus himself preached!

True, this woe-to-the-rich communism, attested in the early chapters of *Acts*, soon became impractical and broke down, despite a sharp warning to the faithful when Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead in punishment for capitalistic deviation. And the Pauline Christians, having disowned the Church of Jerusalem led by St. James and repudiated ritual Judaism, made light of Jesus' statement that the Mosaic Law and its Pharisaic glosses would remain in force until all prophecies were fulfilled. They held that these prophecies had been fulfilled at the Resurrection, and that the Law had no further power over believers in Jesus' godhead. Church Councils were thus free to legislate on all religious questions in His name; and to admit rich men into heaven by widening the eye of the proverbial needle. As a result, Christian monetary ethics soon corresponded closely with those of the Graeco-Roman world: the watchwords of which were *caveat emptor*, and *sine sponsione nihil*—"No loan without collateral!" Yet their Master's words—however altered or glossed by Gentile editors—remain embedded in the Gospels, and have often been taken, by Protestant and Catholic mystics alike, as literally as he meant them.

Paul, though denouncing money-greed as the root of all evil, found himself accused of this very sin by Christian contemporaries. In the *Epistle to the Corinthians*, he justifies his use of an expense account while conveying to the Saints at Jerusalem certain alms collected for them by Asian Churches. He writes: "I have a right to make a respectable public appearance." These Asian Churches were not communistic; but the Jerusalem Saints still pooled their resources and spent all their time in prayer and preaching, despite the Pharisees' view that even Doctors of the Law should toil at a trade: "Six days *shalt* thou labour!" They needed Paul's money not only to cover their own professional expenses, but to maintain their "widows"—namely, the wives whom they had discarded on "making themselves eunuchs for God's sake."

PARADOXICALLY, our international banking system was fostered by the Deuteronomic Law against interest, and by the Deuteronomic gloss on *Exodus* xxii 25: "Thou shalt not treat the debtor as if thou wert an usurer!"—that is, as a moneylender who demands interest. For the Jews of the Dispersal seldom broke their religious ties with Jerusalem where, when rich enough, they would annually attend the High Festivals; and being literate members of the Synagogue, corresponded among themselves in Hebrew about business matters. Simon ben Mathias of Cyrene, say, could trust his cousin Eliezer ben Johanan of Syracuse, a God-fearing Jew, to honour his bills for any amount on an agreement reached years before, and to ask no interest. . . . So Simon would send Eliezer a cargo of Cyrenian goods,

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by way of pledge for an agreed loan; and Eliezer would send Simon his Syracusan goods on the same understanding. Each made a profit on the other's pledge, but no money passed between them until accounts were settled at Jerusalem. Soon, Gentiles took advantage of this Jewish agreement, and sent goods for sale to Syracuse or Cyrene; but would, of course, pay interest on the loan at each end—Jews not being forbidden to charge a Gentile interest.

Seventeenth-century Sephardic Jews, escaping from the Inquisition to Cromwellian England, founded "the City." Christian bankers, in fact, could not trust one another as co-religionists to the degree that Jew could trust Jew; and, although Protestants might sing David's psalm in praise of the upright man who has refrained not only from taking bribes and bearing false witness against the guiltless, but from lending money on interest, even Christian Churches committed this sin.[2]

GREEKS AND ROMANS worshipped a god of Money, Hermes—also patron of Thieves and Diplomats—whom Homer celebrated for cheating the god Apollo while still an infant, much to Father Zeus' amusement. The Christian Church frowned on this recognition of an inborn human frailty, which the Law might perhaps restrain but could never eradicate. Yet a growing Christian disbelief in Heaven, Hell, and dogmatic theology soon restored to Hermes, whom I prefer to call "Mammon," his lost glory.

He is now the only god who still gives active proof of his omnipresence: changing shape continually; scattering rewards or punishments in this world rather than the problematic next; permitting his devotees to dance with the whole *corps de ballet* of Deadly Sins; encouraging a politic disguise of his worship under the mantle of Christianity; and wielding universal power—this side of the grave, at least. Jesus ironically told his hearers to make friends with the Mammons of Unrighteousness, who could offer them everlasting mansions in Heaven.... Yet a genuine priest of Mammon has my respect. He will be far less interested in enjoying the power that wealth gives him, than in observing its influence on trade, industry, science, art, literature, politics, entertainment, sex, religion, scholarship. He will piously harden his heart while serving his god, and acquire an uncanny knowledge of this dirty world: despising all who fail to share his faith that "there is nothing money cannot buy"; and will laugh at love as heartily as love laughs at locksmiths.

Yet his is a hard life: to disregard even minimal sums, or be awed by stupendously large ones, would be a lapse from grace. Perfect dedication to Mammon casts out all affection: the rich man bestows no costly gift on friends who once shared his poverty. And though he may maintain his parents or poor relations for fear their shabbiness may weaken his credit, or pay a prestige price for a blonde model's company, these are not weak surrenders to sentiment. Whatever luxuries he buys himself, such as works of art, country houses, or a yacht (even if he hates the sea), will be excused either as investments with untaxable capital appreciation, or as necessary proofs to his associates that he is not slipping. He cannot avoid the required year-long progress from luxury hotel to luxury hotel: must shoot grouse in Scotland; ski at Gstaad; bet at Ascot; visit his tailor in Savile Row; take his wife to the Paris Collections; attend the *feria* at Seville and the *première* of every Broadway musical—none of which events mean much to him—and spend three or four days each month in jet planes. He does not, as the Banias of India, a moneylending caste, are said to do: perform his *puja* on set days in front of a great heap of gold coin.... Or does he, secretly, when he visits his private vault? Who knows?

Though aware that he can take nothing with him when death comes, he grudges large bequests to his heirs, and delights meanwhile in keeping them short of cash lest they rival him in riches. Often he leaves the bulk of his property to some foundation, so that his name may endure as a successful benefactor. He judges his tips neatly, to avoid charges either of extravagance or meanness, and is seldom seen in the company of lesser financiers or common people. He may at times contribute to public charities as a means of avoiding tax; but his donation must head the list. The poor envy him; and all his companies expand and proliferate....

LAST YEAR a Majorcan journalist interviewed a rich Lapp visitor to our island, and asked how many reindeer he owned. The Lapp answered, through two interpreters: "That

[2] The case has been obscured by use of the word "usury," which Churchmen casuistically define as *extortionate* interest: a sense missing from the Hebrew text.

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is a very improper question in my country: suppose I were to inquire into your bank account?"

A shrewd point. Ask an English workman: "What's your weekly pay packet?", and the answer will seldom be grudged, since he is paid at Union rates, and his mates know it. But ask the same man: "What money have you put by?", and he'll say: "What business is it of yours?" Meaning: "Don't try touching me for a fiver!" A true financier would not tell even his dying mother how much he was worth; the nurse might overhear.... The other day, when I put this question experimentally to a young man of independent means, he answered: "Ask me anything else you please: my politics, my religion, my sexual preferences and technique. ... But *that's* something I can't reveal!"

Now, he knew well enough that I wasn't going to touch him for a fiver; or advise him to give all he had to the poor; or inform on him to the Internal Revenue. Only the sacredness of Mammon sealed his lips.

GOD'S CURSE ON MANKIND, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread!", was taken literally by the Jews, who have never since stopped toiling with their hands or brains; and also by devout Protestants. I am conditioned that way myself, and cannot take a vacation without feelings of guilt—even at an age which would qualify me for an old-age pension, had I licked the right number of National Insurance stamps —which I haven't. Catholics, living in Catholic countries at a further remove from the Jewish ethic, find far less compulsion to work; nor, indeed, do they conscientiously feel obliged to make honest tax returns, despite Jesus' "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's!"

I asked the Israeli Income Tax chief a year or two ago: how honest were the national returns? He answered: "Well, we still have immigrants who fail to distinguish their own government from that of the countries where they were an oppressed and unrepresented minority. So, although our returns are not yet as honest as your Protestant ones, they are far more honest than in Catholic, or Greek Orthodox, or Moslem countries."

A Sanhedrin ruling permitted the Jews to deceive Roman-appointed tax-gatherers, who ranked with prostitutes as unfit to give sworn evidence in court. My own view of the "Render unto Cæsar" text is that Jesus must have said: *"Render not unto God that which is Cæsar's!"*, a reference to the blasphemous inscription on Tiberius' coinage: "SON OF THE GOD AUGUSTUS," which banned its acceptance by the Temple Treasurers; *"Nor unto Cæsar that which is God's,"* namely, acknowledgement of power bestowed on him by a false god. But Jesus will at least have paid his annual poll-tax at Nazareth, since the Pharisees regarded this as a punishment ordained by God for Israel's sins, and in *Matthew* xxii 1 he orders his disciples to obey the Pharisees.

I never lend on interest, or even on security, to a close friend; but neither do I raise an outcry like the Moslem widow who discovered that the money she had put into a bank was yielding interest. The manager explained that interest, though forbidden by the Prophet, was inseparable from banking; and that she could always give hers to the poor. "No," said she, "it's not mine to dispose of. *You* give it to the poor!" "Very well, madam! Name your charity, and send me a written authority for the transfer." She shouted: "How can I authorise you to dispose of what I am forbidden to acknowledge as mine?"

ONE CAN'T FIGHT Mammon. For reasons of health, I am domiciled abroad, but in theory resident here in England; and am taxed on my earnings at source, although disenfranchised (having had my University vote taken from me by a Labour Government and never given back by the Conservatives, as they promised). Yet I don't raise the cry "No taxation without representation!", and continue a loyal subject of the Queen, pretending to myself that her laws are not really framed by a Cabinet led by Mammon's chief executive—the First Lord of the Treasury, whom she expects me to venerate on her account, while forbidden to vote for him! And when, on legal advice, I sell my literary copyrights to a foreign company and pay a reduced tax on them—instead of the personal 7s. 9d. in the £, which seems inequitable since I am already taxed as a resident of Spain—the First Lord of the Treasury sends Mr. Bloodsucker of the Inland Revenue to "stop that leak" by browbeating his opposite number in the foreign country concerned, meanwhile withholding payment of my royalties at source. An odd situation. I am within my legal rights, and Mr. Bloodsucker, as a civil servant, stands to gain nothing except maybe promotion by his unethical trip. And the main reason that I took

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legal advice was to avoid dishonesty! If taxed as a company, I need not make out an annual claim for refund on account of authorial expenses, which I can only guess at because I never keep accounts; and which Mr. Bloodsucker can't check, because I live abroad; and which my income-tax consultant inspires, knowing that Mr. Bloodsucker takes a curious view of how writers live, and allows me necessary expenses which I do not incur, while disallowing other, more necessary ones, which I do incur. Being something of a Pharisee, I consider Mr. Bloodsucker's tax a punishment inflicted on me for a failure to think poetically all the time.

Everyone, except the occasional Robinson Crusoe, or gaolbird, or insane pauper, needs money; but its distribution nowadays is eccentric, and a full purse may depend on an accident of birth, or on skill, or industry, or sleight of hand, or blind luck. In many Moslem and Catholic countries, great wealth and great poverty still co-exist, as they did in Jesus' Jerusalem. Without abundant poor, how can the faithful give abundant alms?

IDEAL COMMUNISM takes Aboriginal Society for its model; but all experiments in brotherly love, even when sponsored by so economically adept a philanthropist as Robert Owen, have failed unless enforced and maintained by sheer need—such as natural disasters like shipwrecks which leave survivors stranded on desert islands. Or, as in Russia after the October Revolution: a break-down of central government. Or, as in Israel: where a constant state of emergency encouraged the growth of *kibbutzim*. Or, as in ancient Sparta: where, we are told, King Lycurgus persuaded the aristocrats to protect themselves against their Helot serfs, and against their enemies of Elis and Messene, by adopting a semi-communistic system in which to prevent bribery, luxury and trade ties with neighbouring states, an iron coinage was struck. Brides were no longer bought, but encouraged to selective breeding; all meals were communal —"a Spartan diet" of bread and black broth. The Spartans admitted no foreigners to their society, with the curious exception of Alcibiades, a renegade Athenian, who in return gave them valuable strategic advice and aided the selective breeding campaign by seducing the Queen of Sparta herself. Children belonged to the State; nobody emigrated; the Spartans hated all outsiders and were hated in return. Every man knew every other man, at least by sight and reputation. And Sparta kept her nominal independence long after the Romans occupied Greece.

By the way, do not take that account of Spartan iron money too literally. It was told by the Greek philosophers who were intent on building up in retrospect an ideal republic of dedicated citizens. The fact is that the primitive currency used throughout the Peloponnese consisted of iron bars cast in the form of spits and imported from Anatolia: iron having by Dorian times ousted bronze in military and agricultural use, so that ingots of copper and tin were less favoured than formerly. And when the 7th-century Lydians paid their Greek mercenaries in small silver disks (stamped with a guarantee of fineness), Athens, Thasos, and other states that owned silver mines followed their example. The Spartans, who had none, though not averse to importing gold and silver for personal or religious uses—paying in slaves procured by means of these same spits beaten into swords and spearheads—found a silver currency expensive and kept to the iron one. It must be remembered that iron before the invention of the Bessemer process did not rust so quickly.... Moreover the Spartan diet of barley bread and bean soup was no more a proof of austerity than the German peasants' preference for rye bread and beer soup; they just happened to like it.

Soviet Russian experiment, despite an energetic propaganda against pluto-democratic bandits and Fascist beasts, has so far failed to eliminate private property. The ex-Czarist Empire proved too large and diversified a unit to accept the idea of brotherliness. Later, when all danger of foreign intervention had passed, the new proletarian dictators set out to enforce brotherliness by unbrotherly means. Israel's *kibbutzim*, on the other hand, have not yet failed, partly because a sense of emergency still exists; partly because their communism was prompted by so genuine a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood that most old members would be ashamed to quit. Yet the *kibbutzim* have not kept pace with the rise in population, and some are now reduced to hiring immigrant labour.

OF THE TWO POWER-BLOCS disputing for world sovereignty, one is controlled by Mammon-lovers; one by Mammon-fearers. Although the Mammon-fearers preach ideal communism,

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under which everyone labours for the nation's good, they enforce it not only by honours and rewards for honest work that should be its own reward, but by imprisonment and even capital punishment for evasion of honest work. And they strengthen their cause by the same psychological means that disgraced the medieval Church—and Czarism.

As for Mammon-lovers, they have long been interested in securing raw materials at bargain prices and so capturing world trade, and have done all they could to ingratiate themselves with the rulers of still under-developed countries. The motive preached in American schools and colleges, as once over here, is to educate the poor starving foreigners into a richer and more civilised way of life. Yet most Americans travelling abroad, with genuine warmth in their hearts, are shocked to find that their prodigal Foreign Aid Programme has not made them any more loved than the British (whom they have outbought and outsold by a more efficient science of Mammonry) but rather less. Money cannot buy love; but (as the millionaire playboy once told a designing little starlet): "Love can buy money."

Since international capitalism goes under democratic disguise and has not so far taken over more than a small part of the civilised world (by controlling industry, science, education, entertainment), a freedom-loving poet may still escape to some region where he can disregard politics, think, do and say what he pleases, and print his own books without an official *imprimatur*. A dictatorship of the proletariat rules out such freedoms; whereas capitalism, by its very inefficiency in standardising appetites and habits, has become a shield for people who neither love nor fear money, and cannot be much interested in the rules that govern its distribution, unless trade cycles temporarily keep them short of food.

MOST ENGLISHMEN will entertain a friend or even a stranger, at considerable cost; yet they baulk at offering a gift of money —except to children, professional beggars, or organised charity: gifts must always be disguised as loans. Moreover, blasphemy against Mammon is far more dangerous nowadays than blasphemy against God. The old atheistic trick of taking out a watch and giving God two minutes to strike one dead—Mussolini used to do that as a young man; but God's mills grind slowly—is less shocking than to tear up a five-pound note and let the wind carry away its pieces.

I know few Englishmen capable of such an act, even though the paper has no intrinsic value and its destruction can be praised as a patriotic lowering of the national debt. I very much doubt whether I could do it myself; but then I have a Protestant conditioning which, though I am no longer a believer, still prevents me, for instance, from laying a book on top of a Bible, even a Biblical Concordance; or from throwing away a crust of bread without making the sign of the cross on it. My rationalisation of such piety towards a Bank of England note would be: "Anyone watching would feel enraged that I had not let it blow, untorn, down the street: for himself, or some other lucky fellow, to pocket quietly...." But suppose I destroyed it in private? Would I not suffer feelings of guilt towards my poorer friends who might have made good use of it?

A HOLIDAY INCIDENT from my North Welsh childhood comes to mind. We had bought teas at a lake-side farm; afterwards I went to play in the farmyard. When a wagonette drove up with more visitors, I ran to open the gate. Someone tossed me a sixpence, and though I did not throw it back, the idea that my disinterested courtesy had been mistaken for moneymaking shocked me.... My male ancestors had always been professional men—doctors, scholars, clergy, and civil servants—and always intermarried with their own kind. At home, we despised trade of any sort, and to this patrician prejudice was added a secretive hardness about money —very much like the family attitude towards sex—meant to rob its possession or use of all joy. I was stinted of pocket money as a child, and still occasionally dream of picking up pennies by the hatful in a park; so that finding sixpence on a pavement now makes me feel infinitely richer than any royalty cheque.

Mammon is a merciless god and a cruel master; yet I have found him a good domestic servant if treated firmly and generously and never spied upon. If ever I get into serious trouble, he has always responded to my consideration for his feelings by coming at once to my rescue. For instance, on Christmas Day, 1924, when I was living in an Oxfordshire cottage with my wife and three children, on a small wound pension, occasional book reviews, and the sale of my library. I had twenty-five shillings in my pocket, and none in the bank,

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but I gave five shillings as a Christmas box to Mr. Launchbury the postman who brought me a batch of Christmas cards and a registered letter. "I hope it's a hundred pounds, sir," he said smiling, as I signed for the letter, "and a merry Christmas to you!" It *was* a hundred-pound note, sent me by a man whom I had met, casually, once or twice: William Kiddier, a brush manufacturer from Nottingham. He wrote: "I have had a good year, I like your poems, and I hear you are in difficulties. Please show your friendship by accepting this. And a merry Christmas to you." Kiddier's gift saved the situation, and although (until about six years ago) I had never saved enough to allow for more than six months' subsistence, Mammon never failed me, because (as my mother would have said) I "put him upon his good behaviour...." Chief among Mammon's agents was T. E. Lawrence who believed, as I did, that after one's own reasonable necessities and obligations had been taken care of, money should be at the disposal of one's friends.

A COMMON FALLACY held by idealist philosophers, religious fanatics, and liberal politicians is that everyone can love everyone else. Sometimes an enforced neighbourliness, especially in wartime, will extend the circle of love to include people with whom as a rule one has nothing in common; but once the danger has passed it soon shrinks again to a few shining names. I dislike organised charities. Too high a percentage of what is collected goes to pay the organisers; nor can I feel genuine love for the nameless beneficiaries, or expect any from them. The hungry children of Central Europe, on whose account, in 1920, I sold my gold watch and a few wedding presents, had grown into brawny Nazis by the 1940s and were taking their revenge on me and my family for Lloyd George's and Clemenceau's mercilessness.

There is no more ironical story in the whole Bible than Jesus' praise of the poor widow who gave her last two mites to the Temple Treasury. Two days later, Judas' thirty pieces of silver came out of this very collection, most of which went to support a priesthood whom Jesus had just condemned as traitors; while the rest paid for further barbaric embellishment of a Temple whose imminent destruction he had already prophesied.

I carry no life assurance—not only because the real value of money has been falling for the last fifty years, so that one gets back far less than one puts in—but because it shows a lack of trust in my servant Mammon. Mammon has treated me honestly, despite my ambiguous dealings with Mr. Bloodsucker, and never heaped my lap with such superfluity of riches that I felt tempted to stop working even one day in seven, or to take vacations. I do not (as I say) keep accounts, leaving that to my bank and literary agents; so long as I know roughly what reserves I have, personal accounts are a waste of time and would hamper my spending and giving. William Kiddier's hundred pounds has never been out of my mind: he honoured me by trusting that I would accept it without embarrassment, as he himself would have done had our positions been reversed. Nor can I forget how T. E. Lawrence, when I was lured into an unlucky trading venture, sent me four chapters of his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* to sell to an American magazine, explaining that honour would not let him touch any money the book might make—and he never did—but that these two hundred pounds would put me straight.

I would be the last to force on any of you a view of money that runs counter to his upbringing. I admit my individual disregard of common economic practice; and spend money only where my heart lies or need calls. Mammon will always honour the calm conviction of financial stability which is called "credit," and appear when called.

I never read economic text-books, but the general trend seems clear enough. There will always be more money to-morrow than yesterday, and it will always be worth less; food will become progressively more insipid; goods progressively more expendable, which means less lovable. All surviving hand-made objects of merit will be collected in museums (and thus withdrawn from circulation). Mammon's metallic coinage will cease, and so will poets; and, on attaining complete automation—the economist's *ne plus ultra*—mankind, then crowded on the earth's surface, at least a hundred souls per acre (at different levels under and above ground, that is), will be faced with the fearful problem of how to while away its leisure time except in perfect sameness of experience, and look wistfully back at these hectic days of disorganised unbrotherliness. Unless, of course, a philanthropic virus intervenes and reduces the bemused survivors to a simpler economy.

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Herbert Gold

A Day with the Bogeyman

Letter from Haiti

On that day in November, 1963, I may have been the only tourist in the Republic of Haiti, which had enjoyed a brief flowering as a visitor's paradise before the crumbling into near chaos of the Duvalier régime. Now the predatory Tonton Macoutes—or "Bogeymen"—wandered this desolated tropical paradox, their guns cradled sleepily in the crooks of their arms, gaining revenge for history through small extortions, frequent beatings, occasional murders. On the theory that they owed everything to him, and that his fall would result in their slaughter, and that therefore they could be both trusted and indulged, the *Chef de la Nation*, François Duvalier, had disarmed the police and the Army and developed this militia of his personal pets. They fed on the scorched poverty of the land. The beauty of sky and sun, bay and mountains, now had its traditional accompaniment of idle violence. The time of human sacrifice, absent in Haiti except as legend, had returned in a parody of a European fascism under the so-called Government of National Renovation.

The Minister of Tourism heard of my lonely visit at the Grand Hotel Oloffson—I had once lived for a year in Haiti—and sent word by a police spy, who was ineffectually disguised as a journalist, that he would like to take me on an outing—a *pique-nique*. At the appointed hour, ten o'clock on a Sunday morning, the Minister's Buick drove up the curving, palm-lined driveway. We were six in the car, a German diplomat whom I shall call Bruno, his pretty young wife, Gretchen, the police spy, Bienvenue l'Aurore, the Minister, whose real name is Nevers Constant, a young Mexican girl, and myself.

This is not the occasion for an analysis of the current troubles of Haiti—hurricanes, floods, famines, a police state staffed by anæmic policemen, a decaying society, and a mad ruler. But please imagine our picnicking group driving through a dusty weary Port-au-Prince, a city denuded of cars, beset by bored gangs of armed thugs and a desperate population. Monsieur Nevers Constant, the Minister of Tourism, seemed to believe that if he could convince me, his Emissary Tourist, that Haiti is a tourist haven, the rest of my compatriots would find their way to spend their dollars under the brilliant tropical sky of Dr. François Duvalier. The Mexican girl, a very thin blonde with very long hair and perhaps the skinniest legs in the Caribbean (including both Central America and the Greater and Lesser Antilles) kept scratching the mosquito bites on her calves and complaining that no one had yet taught her either English or French. In answer to my question about what she was doing in Haiti, she replied, "I am throwing myself into the diplomacy." Although this sounded like a peculiarly dramatic form of suicide, it turned out that she had come to study French at the Institut Lope de Vega.

The German diplomat explained that he was on a cultural mission for his government. "Loffly pipple! Vriendchip!" (In the future I will try to avoid transcription of his accent.) His wife, a delicate Berliner, added blushingly, "Honeymoon! *Lune de miel!*" She blushed for me in English, and then turned to blush again in French. The couple were visiting nineteen countries in three months, and then would report to some central clearing house for reports on Latin America in Bonn.

Herbert Gold, *whose latest novel is "Salt" (Dial Press, New York, and Secker & Warburg, London), lives in San Francisco.*

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The police spy, Bienvenue l'Aurore, had come along as my special companion. He was detailed, apparently, to the task of talking to me, making me feel happy, and keeping watch on my activities. Occasionally he would make a verbal jab at the government and then wait for my reply with a radiant, enticing smile. I was usually able to dodge him. He had a short span of attention.

And there was the Minister himself, a very fat man with a pendulous lower lip, a nasal speech that sounded as if he had inherited a bad cold three generations back, and the habit of falling asleep suddenly, in the middle of a sentence. He drove. When he felt himself falling asleep, he drove very slowly. Otherwise he conversed in a laborious, thick-throated French.

FIRST M. CONSTANT drove us downtown to visit his recent accomplishments in reviving the tourist trade. He had erected enormous neon signs with such legends, in French, as: "I AM THE FLAG, ONE AND INDIVISIBLE—FRANCOIS DUVALIER" or "MY ONLY ENEMIES ARE THE ENEMIES OF HAITI—FRANCOIS DUVALIER." "The tourists will love that," I assured him, crammed by his side with his pistol pressing against my thigh.

"They're coming next week," he said. "Lots of them—hordes. Beautiful school teachers, millionaires, artists *en retraite*."

"Ah oui Excellence," cried Bruno. The German was qualified for his intercultural labours by studies in both Spanish and Portuguese, but he had not learned a fluent French. Therefore all his initiative and skill at improvisation came into play in order to communicate the proper emotions to the Minister. When he saw something good (neon signs, paved roads, smiling faces), he cried, *"Ah oui Excellence, oui! oui!"* When he saw something bad (hurricane damage, slums, children without shoes), he said, *"Oh Excellence, tch, tch, tch."* If this did not adequately sum up his emotions, he would think further upon it, shaking his head from side to side. *"Excellence! Tch! Tch! Tch!"*

The Minister, breathing thickly, drove us past certain selected monuments so that the *oui*'s were brought to outnumber the *tch*'s.

For example, there was the neon sign which faced the empty harbour, empty of tour boats, empty of freighters, empty of fishing boats, empty of everything but the brackish water of the harbour. "JOYEUX NOEL 1964," announced the neon sign, making an error of a year in its calculations.

"Maybe they mean next year will be a happy year," said Bienvenue l'Aurore, once again essaying the role of *agent provocateur*. Once again I gave proof of maturity—strong and silent.

A workman was tinkering with the sign, attaching the electricity. His family stood about in the little park in the centre of Boulevard Harry-Truman, admiring him because he had a job and also because there was nothing else to do. The Minister blew his horn as a signal and then stopped the Buick; they all came to attention; he barked out ministerial orders and advice in French concerning the installation of neon for the *Rénovation Nationale*. He then smiled graciously and bid them rest. I asked him why he spoke French and not Creole, since few other than the educated élite understand much French. "Creole is a joke for children," he informed me. "Personally I don't understand it. All Haitians speak French—the French of Paris, not of Canada. Canadians speak execrable French, don't you find?"

I found it useful once again to apologise for my own French. That always broke the ice.

"Bon travail, mon ami!" he called to the workman.

"Hokai, M'sieu Minist'."

As we drove away, he explained that beautification and city planning were his two ideals in life. Beginning in a few days, on December 1st, recordings of Christmas carols, in English and in French, would be heard at this spot, beamed especially to the tourists, whom he wanted to feel entirely at home in Haiti. Also the police would arrest all beggars, prostitutes, peddlers, and anyone passing without shoes or identification papers or otherwise giving evidence of sinister missions. All the tourist had to do was to point out a Communist and the authorities would take care of him. "Not like in Cuba, eh?" he asked, nudging me with his pistol.

HE THEN ABRUPTLY fell asleep while the Buick glided past the slum of La Saline, in which uncounted thousands of Haitians live in houses made of rubbish and banana leaves, with no jobs and practically no chance to find one, waiting for epidemic, starvation, or fire to carry them off to a better place. Patrolling the area were small gangs of armed Tonton Macoutes, the official Duvalier ruling class. The Tonton

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Macoutes are as common as pigs, dogs, or roosters on the byways of Haiti. They collect tolls, inspect and search, and live by incursions against their neighbours, against visitors, against anybody their eyes light upon. They confiscate what pleases them. As an experienced cop-hater, I was astonished that I found them even more ominous in their rags than a uniformed fascist corps would be. There was no real hierarchy; there was no appeal; there was no arguing with them.

"And this is the new jet airport for the tourists," said Minister Constant, abruptly alert, blowing his horn to have the guard open the barbed-wire gate. True enough, a landing strip was being constructed here on the edge of Port-au-Prince. We drove up and down with grand freedom.

"Ah oui, Excellence!" cried Bruno.

"Is airplanes," said Conchita, the eighteen-year-old Mexican diplomat.

"How sweet of you, how gentle, how nice, to come all this way," said Gretchen to me.

"Haiti is like home to me," I said.

She asked: "Is the United States of America like this?"

"And our new jet airport?" demanded the Minister.

"I love that too," I said.

"It will surely be finished next year," he promised. "We are strictly ahead of schedule."

"Excellence! Oui!"

I was grateful to Germany for having given birth to Bruno, since he took the burden of responding off my conscience. He responded enough for everyone, sometimes uttering a single *oui* or a *oui* in series, sometimes clacking his tongue to indicate the full compassion of tongue-tied Western man for the troubles of this little Caribbean nation with its confused tradition of Africa, of France, of colonisation, misery, overpopulation, and perverse grace and hope.

Conchita, the Mexican girl diplomat, was scratching her calves. Little flecks of blood appeared. I said, in English and in French, "Don't scratch, *ne grattez-pas*." But she scratched away and asked me, smiling like a beatnik statesman stalling for time, "Hanh?"

"Moustiko bites, *tch tch tch*," said the German.

"No malaria!" cried the Minister. "Due to Haitian science no malaria! You take pills?"

"Oh Excellence, oui! oui!"

The Minister was beeping the horn to awaken the guard at the fence of the jet airport. We had been locked into the landing strip. Now we needed to be let out. I was ready to throw my arms about my head to protect myself against an early jet arrival, but we were released in time, and dipped and bowed on to the road leading past Damiens towards Duvalierville, our next destination. Damiens is the agricultural college, a little matrix of political manipulation and serious technical labour at improving livestock, stocking waters with fish, experimentation with the possibilities of raising food commercially in a land which never knows frost. Along the roads the begging and the starving turned to gaze at the black ministerial automobile. I chatted with the German diplomat's wife about Haitian painting while Conchita malevolently stroked her mosquito bites. This was her Mexican scientific answer to the problem of insect control. I wondered numbly in the midday heat how a Mexican had gotten so blonde, so thin, so morose in her first diplomatic endeavour.

As REPRESENTATIVE by default of all American tourism, I received sly questions from the Minister. The reputation of Haiti had suffered from recent official murders, destructions, expulsions of priests, prosecutions of the élite class; American aid had been cut off and Americans were being advised to stay away; pressures were being applied. The Tonton Macoutes, the Chief's personal creatures, that gang of marauding and extorting militia, had particularly blackened Haiti for visitors, who desire at least an appearance of tranquillity and reliability. Since taxes were not collected in the usual ways, they were now collected in unusual ways. A group of Macoutes would enter a businessman's office and beat him until he paid. Or they would set fire to his house. Or, in milder fashion, they would extract tolls on the roads or, soliciting, door to door. In their tattered pants and their "I AM THE FLAG" tee-shirts, with their bands of ammunition and their M-1 rifles or sub-machine guns cradled loosely in their arms, they inspired a pervasive feeling of unease.

"Soon the tourist will come to see our National Renovation," declared the Minister of Tourism. "Soon?" he repeated to me.

"That would make Haiti more prosperous," I parried, with all my dormant skills at statesmanship being awakened.

"But a bad propaganda in the New York *Times*," he reported.

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"I know."

"Tch tch tch."

"We had to build a new society, didn't we?" asked the Minister.

"Oh Excellence, oui oui oui!"

"And there were malcontents, vain malefactors, the pigs of the unborn." (He used a Spanish phrase.)

"Oh Excellence, tch tch tch."

"So," concluded the Minister triumphantly, "the National Assembly has voted a budget of twenty-two thousand dollars in order to place advertisements in the New York *Times* which will tell the truth about Our Protector, the estimable Doctor François Duvalier."

Timidly I remarked that the chief problem lay elsewhere than in the New York *Times*. I wished, in this world of sleep-walking misery, to see twenty-two thousand dollars worth of rice distributed to those rendered homeless, their gardens destroyed by the hurricane; to the children with swollen bellies and retreated eyes who lay in the compounds in front of their *caille-pailles*, the Afro-Haitian house of straw.

"No," the Minister sternly corrected me. "We must fight evil with evil."

I remembered my place, noticed Bienvenue l'Aurore breathing tensely at my side, and fell to watching the road again. It takes a long time to misunderstand people. I was too abrupt a nostalgic revisitor to Haiti to have the proper critical judgment of the hunger of others, the proper stoical acceptance of the Bogeymen. Occasionally the car would be stopped by the Macoutes who would cry, *"Inspection!"* The Minister managed to avoid having us searched by crying out in return, "Le Ministre Constant! Le Ministre Nevers Constant!"

"Ouais. Passez."

We passed, inching by the gasoline drums with which they barricaded the road. Instead of rolling them out of the way, they gazed at them to indicate partial intention. They sat on crates or lounged in the ditches and said, *"Ouais."*

ABOUT AN HOUR'S drive from Port-au-Prince along the Saint Marc road, we poked our way into one of the major achievements of the Duvalier régime. This was the new town of Duvalierville, built on the site of an old Haitian peasant village, Cabaret. Cabaret had been levelled by bulldozers—houses, trees, bushes, and plantings. While one should not romanticise the traditional settlement of *caille-pailles*, those straw-roofed houses built of mud and banana leaves, the town had its own relevance to the conditions of Haitian country life. Duvalierville is a parody of Brasilia, cement block-houses with butterfly roofs, a cement cockfighting pit, a cement stadium, a cement police station, and a grill of streets going nowhere, frazzled off into the surrounding mud.

"Why was this town built here?" I asked.

"By the will of the people," said the Minister.

"Who will live here?"

"The deserving. They will pay no rent."

"How will they be selected?"

"By the census," he said enigmatically.

This halted my questions for the moment. The German diplomat said *oui*. We drove in and through and back down the streets of Duvalierville. People in the streets were slow to move. Even the dogs and the black, skinny Haitian pigs were in no hurry to escape our wheels. The sun beat down without respite on the denuded fields. Where once palm trees and banana bushes had grown, there now were cracked patches of clay and running ditches. "Soon electricity! Purified water! Example to the Haitian people of the benevolence of the Chief!" cried the Minister.

Bruno was in ecstasy.

Conchita wanted to know when the picnic began. That is a pig? she remarked disdainfully. In Mexico the pigs and dogs have separate identities. The pig is fat because Mexico is an advanced industrial and agricultural nation.

There was the dank smell of wet cement in sunny air. A beggar came up to show his gums and ask, *"Ba'm cinq cob* (Give me five cents)."

WHEN WE HAD examined Duvalierville, and had seen the huts in which the former inhabitants of Cabaret now awaited their further disposition in a nameless compound, we then headed back along the bay towards Ibo-Beach, a resort for upper-class Haitians and tourists. This was the former Isle Cabrit (Goat Island), a sandy spit in the water which had been fortified by an enterprising Haitian engineer, reached by motorboat from a place on shore. We disembarked and hurried to our model *caille-pailles* to change into swimming suit, spear-fishing uniform, skin-diving equipment. The German diplomat was abruptly transformed into a submarine and went crawling across the bottom, examining coral and marine life. I saw little of him for the rest of the afternoon, although occasionally, like a whale, he spouted. There was the usual

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aimless pattering of a day at the beach, sleeping in the sun, dips in the salt, drinking of rum and tradings of worn-out, frazzled newspapers and magazines. The Minister held my hand tightly to his, *tutoied* me, and told me about his trips as a representative of Haiti in Washington. "Oh, Lyndon is my good friend," he cried, "and Laddy-bird, too, you know? I have dine at their house these many time. You know his friend Marty? You know his friend Joe Quelquechose? Oh I know him well, he is a friend to Haiti, my deep personal friend."

"Personally I don't know him," I admitted.

"Joe, Joe, Joe——" he snapped his finger angrily. "What's Joe's last name? It come to me later."

Conchita tried rubbing rum on her mosquito bites. For some reason no one else seemed to be much bothered, but she was swelling and bleeding and suffering. The word "Allergy" was passed about in French, Creole, Spanish, English, and German by the various guests at the picnic. The Minister suggested that if she swallow the rum instead of rubbing it into her wounds a greater benefit might ensue. He winked at me. Though he was a Minister in the Government of National Renovation and Social Justice, he knew how to unbend.

"You don't know Lyndon?" he insisted.

"I live in San Francisco," I apologised. "I don't know many people."

"Tch tch tch," said the submarine, emerged from no place to set a conch to dry in the sun as a souvenir. He was wearing flippers and puffing. He stood in the sun and beat his chest, and winked past the Minister to his wife. Abruptly I decided he was not stupid, but just a hypocrite. His wife was too pretty for him to be stupid; there is no law that prevents a hypocrite from having a pretty wife. I could be on the right track, logically. I could also still be in error.

"My husband doesn't like primitive art," said Gretchen, "he is a Doctor in Economics yet. You say yet?"

"Still."

"He is still a Doctor in Economics, but soon I will teach him to love the primitive painters of nineteen nations, one of them Portuguese, one French, and the rest speaking Spanish."

ONE OF THE ODD facts about the Isle Cabrit is that it seems to be isolated from humanity. In Haiti, one of the most densely populated lands in the world, privacy is nearly unknown; dense crowds of workers, strollers, beggars, children, peddlers, shoeshine boys, prostitutes, babies, herdsmen, travellers, farmers, philosophers, thieves, police, militia, and others perform their business or their avocations in public, on the road, wherever you are performing your own business or avocation. But this island was an island, and a strip of water lay between it and the mainland (which, of course, is a larger island). Except for the barmen, waiters, beachboys, other tourists and visitors, and our hosts, we were absolutely alone; except, that is, for the fishermen sailing a few yards offshore; except, that is, for the crowds clustered on the beach, straining their eyes to try to make out what peculiar ways wealth and power invent to fill the hours. In this peculiar Haitian isolation—this relative isolation—the Minister poured out his philosophy of life, his history, his hopes and dreams, and his repertory of sexual techniques which he had tested on his wife and a respectable series of mistresses, none of whom could ever resist him. I listened because I was fascinated and also because he was a Tonton Macoute. He carried a pistol tucked into his two-piece bathing dress. He droned on and on in his congested voice, coughing occasionally with emotion. "I take you back five years. It is Carnival. She is a tourist, a schoolteacher from Chee-k'go—you know Chee-k'go in the Illinois?—and she is beautiful but soon the holidays end. *Ah la pauvre* Haiti, you have lost your fairest bloom. She send me greeting cards every year. She cannot forget me. Don't scratch, please." That last remark was directed to the Mexican diplomat.

"Now you tell me about your love," he said to me.

Having read widely in Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, Smiley Blanton, Theodore Reik, and Wilhelm Reich, not to speak of Freud and Ovid, the poets and the novelists, I felt qualified to speak and yet strangely timid.

"You are a man!" the Minister urged me.

I blushed and could not gainsay this observation.

Fortunately again, as in the matter of his friend Lyndon Johnson, he was distracted by other events. One of the cooks had caught a lobster. He had earlier caught several lobsters. He brought it forward to be inspected by the Minister. The Minister turned it over and approved it as he might have approved the vintage of the wine. Now lunch was being laid out alfresco for us—avocado salad with tomatoes

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and cucumbers from Kenscoff, lobster and ham, cheeses, Creole rice and beans, plenty of rum-sodas and cokes and charcoal broiled steaks for the Americans. I chose adventure by taking lobster. "It's really crayfish," stated the Minister. "Soon we will export them to the States because they don't know the difference. We who have the French inheritance enjoy a more sensitive palate, that's a known fact."

At the end of a long day in the sun, we loaded ourselves into the motorboat to be carried back to shore. The owner of Ibo Beach looked ready to weep; the Minister had signed for the food and drink and the government does not pay its bills. But the rest of us were satiated with sun, crayfish, swimming, talking, and old copies of *Match* and *Nouvelliste*.

DRIVING BACK to Port-au-Prince, there were occasional moments of silence. The car skidded past potholes, went honking through crowds, ploughed through debris. Bruno felt obliged to keep up his end (*"Oui! oui!"*), and sometimes addressed me in English, since the Minister also understood it. "Iss vonderbar," he declared, "iss fery vonderbar, iss only zmiling vaces in zis country."

At that very moment the car was brought to a halt by a troupe of Tonton Macoutes with their weapons cocked and their eyes cold and malevolent. *"C'est le Ministre Constant!"* bawled our host.

"Inspection."

"Le Ministre Constant!"

"In-spec-tion."

They made us stand out, they searched the car, they searched us, they kept the guns levelled on us. Illiterate, careless of law, they were uninterested in the Minister. He was just another rich man from Port-au-Prince to these nameless ones. The Mexican girl began to weep with fear. When she bent to scratch a bite, a Macoute waved his rifle at her and ordered her to stand up. Her tears ran; she was afraid to scratch or wipe. The German's wife, pale and icy, stood silently watching while le Ministre Constant argued in Creole. He was sweating and nasal and dismayed. They did not know him. They asked him to open the trunk of the car. They tapped the spare tyre. They prodded the cushions. They walked about while we stood under guard and they discussed how else to prove their patriotism. At last they accepted a toll from Monsieur Constant and allowed us to get back in the automobile. But they still kept their guns on us. I asked the Minister not to move while they pointed their weapons our way; I did not want us to be shot for a misunderstanding. He agreed, shaking with rage, and spoke in Creole, *"Nou capab passé?"*

They stared.

"M'Minist'! Nou passé?"

Finally their leader turned on his heels and strolled off. He was followed by the others. Monsieur Constant wheeled past the gasoline drums in the road, accelerated, and we were off down the road to Port-au-Prince, the capital, and the known world beyond it. After a moment of silence, the German spoke:

"Excellence?" he repeated to make sure that our host was listening. *"Excellence? Tch tch tch."*

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Nathalie Sarraute

By J. G. Weightman

ON THOSE RARE occasions when one meets well-known people, more often than not one is disappointed by their failure to display any of those characteristics for which they are famous. The celebrated poet discusses the Reports and White Papers he has bought from H.M. Stationery Office and is anxiously poring over in an attempt to understand the modern world. A Minister of the Crown will give the impression that he is far less interested in foreign affairs than in Proust. But sometimes one strikes lucky. I have heard of an admirer of Ionesco who was invited to lunch at the dramatist's flat and was delighted when, in the middle of the meal, the postman delivered an enormous parcel, the unwrapping of which occupied the company, filled the room, and created the proliferating absurdity of an improvised Ionesco play. I myself have a comparably significant memory of one of my meetings with Nathalie Sarraute. We were sitting in a rather crowded café and, wanting to attract the attention of a waiter, I asked her advice on a point of etiquette about which I had been wondering. Would I be justified in raising a finger and calling out "*Garçon!*"? Certainly not, she said. To call "*Garçon!*" would be to act like those bourgeois who deny their subordinates individual reality by addressing them as if they were stereotypes; no sensitive, right-minded person could behave like that. Obviously, to snap my fingers without giving tongue would be still more insulting. On the other hand, if I cried "*Monsieur!*", several unsatisfactory consequences would ensue: I might appear ridiculous, or too heavily ironical, or no-one would be sure whom I was addressing. What, then, was to be done? Nothing, she said. We must just sit and wait.

A little later, a member of her family hurried in to discuss with her the buying of a baby's coat that was to be given as a rather formal present. They settled the question of the size and colour and, as the other person was dashing out again to make the purchase, Mme Sarraute called after her: "*N'oublie pas qu'il faut le nom du faiseur!*" In other words, the coat, to be a valid bourgeois present, had to bear the name of one of the recognised makers.

Mme Sarraute's books, which have made her famous among the *literati* of two continents as an exponent of the French "New Novel," are about such tiny points as these. If I utter a word in a café, what surging complexity of inarticulate attitudes, both in myself and others, lies behind it? Every day, of course, hundreds or thousands of French bourgeois stereotypes raise their fingers and cry "*Garçon!*", and every day hundreds or thousands of waiter-stereotypes hurry to do their bidding and, on both sides, bourgeois and waiters probably assume that this is quite in order; this is what life is like; this is "reality." But they are mistaken. Each individual is a teeming mass of original movements (tropisms) from which convention, habit, or inertia have selected a simplified pattern; this pattern is taken to be the "truth" when, in fact, it is a sediment or ossification. Most people live their lives in terms of the ossification, and everyone is forced to submit to it in certain cases; for instance, when one French bourgeois family, even an enlightened one, makes a present to another, the ultimately significant detail is not that the present should be appropriate or aesthetic in itself (although the French tend to be exceptionally particular on both these scores) but that the label should at once eliminate doubts about whether or not the object belongs to the accepted, closed, bourgeois system of exchanges. To be a bourgeois or a waiter, or any other type of "character," is to submit to the range of signs defining that limited identity; it is to speak a language that is living in the sense that it is still used, but dead in the sense that it is not being reinvented.

Now a function of art as a whole, and of literature in particular, is to see behind existing convention into the wealth of possibilities that the convention does not cater for. Each genuine artist introduces a new vision, *i.e.* a fresh selec-

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tion from amongst the infinite possibilities of reality. With the passage of time, this vision itself will become conventional and appear inadequate to some new and genuine artist. But such ageing is not a cause for dismay; on the contrary, what could be more bracing than to become aware of the inexhaustible newness of reality?

MME SARRAUTE'S BASIC TENETS, which I have thus roughly summarised from her book of essays on the novel, *L'Ere du soupçon* (1956), are obviously not far removed from those of Jean-Paul Sartre, and it is not surprising that Sartre should have contributed an enthusiastic preface to her first novel, *Portrait d'un inconnu*. His conception of *la mauvaise foi*, that half-conscious dishonesty that leads people to accept borrowed attitudes instead of exercising their freedom, is close to her view that most "characters" are a simplification in comparison with the raw material of psychological reality from which they are drawn. But it cannot be said that Mme Sarraute owes anything to Sartre or that she started from a philosophical attitude and wrote her novels to exemplify it. In the first place, she began writing along her chosen line before Sartre published any of his important books and she has never followed him on the specific issue of "committed" literature. Although her political sympathies seem to be with the Left, she denies that it is the artist's business to do anything but express his vision as he sees it, in connection with that limited, and perhaps very humble, section of life with which he has first-hand acquaintance. Most probably she looks upon Sartre's committed writings as a mistake, as a crude manipulation of ready-made counters, the concept of Existentialist freedom operating only in the manipulation, when it should be used instead to break down the counters into a truer representation of life. Also, she has explained that she began writing her first book, *Tropismes* (1939), before she had worked out intellectually what it was she was trying to do. Her four subsequent novels—*Portrait d'un inconnu* (1948), *Martereau* (1953), *Le Planétarium* (1959), and *Les Fruits d'Or* (1963)[1]—are all elaborations of aspects of the early book. In holding so doggedly to the same course, Mme Sarraute resembles other exponents of the "New Novel"; whatever doubts one may have about the ultimate importance of their work, one cannot but admire their singlemindedness.

ATROPISM, according to the dictionary, is the response of an organism to a stimulus. Since childhood, Mme Sarraute says, she has always been aware of the fact that our mental life is made up of masses of infinitesimal movements, many of which, perhaps even most of which, have spent themselves or become blurred with others, before we have had time to be fully aware of them or to put a name to them. It is here, in this fundamental vibration of our being, that truth and sincerity are to be found, and the problem of realism is how to translate it into words. On the subject of realism, Mme Sarraute makes some impeccably thoughtful remarks:

> But, people will ask, what do you mean by a realistic writer? Well, quite simply—and it could not be otherwise—a writer who, above all, however great his desire to amuse his contemporaries, to reform them, to instruct them, or to fight for their emancipation, applies himself, while making an effort to cheat as little as possible, and to neither trim nor smooth anything for the purpose of overcoming contradictions and complexities, to seizing with all the sincerity of which he is capable, to scrutinising as far as his sharpness of vision will permit him to see, what appears to him to be reality.
>
> His passion for this reality is so great and so sincere that he shrinks from no sacrifice it may entail. Indeed, he accepts the greatest of all those a writer may be led to make: loneliness and the moments of doubt and distress that this involves. . . .
>
> Style (whose harmony and visible beauty are such a constant, dangerous temptation for writers) is for this writer merely an instrument, the only value of which is that of serving to extract and embrace as closely as possible the fragment of reality he is trying to lay bare. All desire to write "beautifully" for the pleasure of doing so, to give aesthetic enjoyment to himself or to his readers, is quite inconceivable to him; style, from his standpoint, being capable of beauty, only in the sense that an athlete's gesture is beautiful; the better it is adapted to its purpose, the greater the beauty. And this beauty, which is composed of vigour, precision, vivacity, suppleness, boldness and economy of means, is merely the expression of its effectiveness.
>
> (*The Age of Suspicion.*)

However, there still remains an important linguistic problem. Words begin, as it were, at a much more superficial level than this basic reality Mme Sarraute is interested in. She has published no full-scale critique of language, but from the incidental remarks in her novels it

[1] The translations from the French (by Marie Jolas) are published by John Calder (London) and George Braziller (New York): *Tropisms* and *The Age of Suspicion* (1964); *The Planetarium* (1961); *Portrait of a Man Unknown* (1959); *Martereau* will be published in the autumn of this year and *The Golden Fruits* early in 1965.

Mme Sarraute was awarded on 3 May the International Literary Prize of the Formentor Jury, meeting in Salzburg. Previous winners include Beckett, Borges, Uwe Johnson, and Gadda.

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is easy to see that she is bothered by the generalising tendency inherent in linguistic expression. Every word, except a unique proper name (if there is such a thing), is a generalisation, *i.e.*, brings under the same label a very large group of ill-defined phenomena: "house," "chair," "garden," "good," "bad," "black," "white," etc. are rough approximations which we repeat indefinitely without stopping to reflect that, for instance, when we say "a white house" in connection with a particular house, we are not grasping its true individuality (it may be more or less of a "house," more or less "white"), but putting it into a class of constructions so large that we are saying nothing at all about its uniqueness. The situation is even worse in the case of words referring to feelings. It is difficult to imagine any character in a Sarraute novel saying to another: "I love you" because the term "love" is an impossibly clumsy piece of shorthand. How can a sensitive person ever sum up all the fluctuating variety of an intense relationship by means of one, much used word? Actually, "love" occurs, almost inadvertently, in *Portrait d'un inconnu*, but it is followed at once by the comment: "... again one of those crude words that stun like a blow with a club." Mme Sarraute, faced with language, is like someone who has been presented with a childish jig-saw puzzle in which the pieces are far too big and coarsely coloured to make a picture with anything like the grain of reality. She wants to cut up the pieces into ever smaller particles until she arrives at a mosaic of minute points of light exactly corresponding to our faculty of perception at its most acute. In this sense, she can be called a psychological pointillist.

This ambition is, I think, the key to all her work, both creative and critical. If she is almost as scornful of the "traditional" novel as Robbe-Grillet, this is because she looks upon it as a rudimentary jig-saw puzzle. The title of her critical study, *L'Ere du soupçon*, refers to the suspicion now surrounding "characters" in novels. A character, traditionally, was an entity with a name, a profession, and certain recurrent features. The author saw him from the outside as an object and explained him from the inside with divine omniscience. Both procedures are now inadequate; to harden the character into a finished, definable unit is just as impossible as to claim to know what goes on inside him. No character can be finished, since the process of living is perpetual psychological newness, whether it is accepted as such or not. Two people together in a room are not two "characters" but a flickering interchange of impressions, a double series of tropisms. At the same time, the writer is not God, nor is he a super-psychologist; he does not explain, he describes. Why should he bother to break up what he knows of his own nature into separate fragments and pretend that each fragment is a separate character? His function is, rather, to describe a field of perception of which his own subjectivity and other people's objectivity are interconnected incidents, perpetually reacting to each other like those plant-animals on the floor of the sea that live in a state of tremulous intimacy with their habitat. (Mme Sarraute is constantly using imagery involving tentacles and antennae.)

IT WILL BE OBVIOUS why Virginia Woolf is mentioned with approval. She too saw the stuff of life as a kind of unbroken and animate web, full of shifting lights. Mme Sarraute also praises Ivy Compton-Burnett for having evolved a form of dialogue which, while it is not "realistic" in the more superficial sense (few people speak, or ever spoke, quite in that way), produces a sensation of reality because it is the voice of subjective/objective truth floating between the characters. Mme Sarraute even argues that the most permanent part of Dostoevsky and Proust is not their character-drawing, since the characters, she says, already have a rather dated look, but their rendering of the basic psychological fabric from which the characters emerge. Paradoxically enough for one who is obsessed with the idea that it is the duty of literature to be "original," Mme Sarraute seems to believe that the most original literature, which strikes down to this fundamental reality, reveals a kind of undifferentiated material common to all individuals, "a new unanimism," as she calls it.[2] To use another image from painting, it is almost as if an artist were to delve so conscientiously into the truth of material creation that he ended up by painting nothing but hydrogen atoms, or fundamental particles, or whatever the scientists now say the world is made up of—supposing these ultimate units were paintable. Why Mme Sarraute wants to go as far down as this and why she thinks truth is universal at that level, she does not explain. I shall have to touch on the problem again later, because there may be a metaphorical confusion here, as in some other theories connected with the "New Novel." The idea that truth is truer deeper down may itself be an old-fashioned convention; the implications of

[2] The word *unanimisme* was popularised in the earlier years of the century by Jules Romains, who wanted literature to stress his conviction that in the complex, modern world, individuals are more completely "members of one another" than in previous ages.

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modern science seem to be that there are various strata of truth and that we have no means of deciding whether the lower ones are any more valid than the upper ones. This has a bearing on the problem of the "character" in literature.

SINCE MME SARRAUTE is primarily interested in the subjective/objective fabric of life, she might be said to be more of a poet than a novelist. *Tropismes* is a collection of twenty-four very short prose-poems, each of which attempts to grasp the complexities of an apparently simple situation: parents trailing through the streets with their children and looking dispiritedly into shop-windows; rather drab domestic situations in which a husband is exasperated by his wife's pettiness and can do nothing about it, or bourgeois women chatter emptily like birds. I confess I cannot work up much more enthusiasm for this volume than for a comparable short collection of prose pieces by Robbe-Grillet called *Instantanés*, and I am not surprised that, as Mme Sarraute says, it aroused no comment when it first appeared in 1939. The writing is neat and scrupulous, but each item seems puzzlingly slight. The collection has no general theme, except perhaps the dim unsatisfactoriness of French bourgeois behaviour. I would say that just as telling fragments of the same kind, written without any references to "tropisms," could be culled from a number of traditional, sensitive novels: from those of Colette, for instance. It is true that Colette, like Virginia Woolf, often overwrites, whereas Mme Sarraute is too honest ever to do so, but when Colette and Virginia Woolf are good, they seem to be saying more in the same space. For instance, the following "poem" which is meant to be complete in itself, presents the kind of subject that Colette, Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield or even Francis Ponge might have dealt with, adding to it their own particular psychological penetration or verbal conceits. Mme Sarraute treats it so puritanically that the question arises: Is she saying anything at all? The sentences read like notes for a short story or a poem that has not yet been written:

> On the outskirts of London, in a little cottage with percale curtains, its little back lawn sunny and all wet with rain.
>
> The big, wistaria-framed window in the studio, opens on to this lawn.
>
> A cat with its eyes closed, is seated quite erect on the warm stone.
>
> A spinster-lady with white hair, and pink cheeks that tend towards purple, is reading an English magazine in front of the door.
>
> She sits there, very stiff, very dignified, quite sure of herself and of others, firmly settled in her little universe. She knows that in a few moments the bell will ring for tea.
>
> Down below, the cook, Ada, is cleaning vegetables at a table covered with white oil-cloth. Her face is motionless, she appears to be thinking of nothing. She knows that it will soon be time to toast the buns, and ring the bell for tea. (*Tropisms.*)

With *Portrait d'un inconnu*, which Sartre called "an anti-novel which reads like a detective story," Mme Sarraute's intentions are clearer. We are in the mind of an unnamed person—a man, presumably, since the grammatical endings are masculine—who, for reasons unstated, is keeping a sort of watch on two—dare I say?—"characters," an elderly man and his daughter, between whom no love is lost. Either of the two could have figured in *Tropismes*. They appear to fluctuate uncertainly in the narrator's field of perception. The elderly man has some of the characteristics of a miser; he fusses about the things his daughter takes away from his flat, and about her inability to live on her allowance. She, for her part, seems to be trying to avoid the narrator. One or two passages clarify into recognisable episodes: for instance, the father has a quarrel with his daughter and locks her out of his flat, and at the end the book emerges into the light of common day when the daughter becomes engaged to a commanding positivistic man, who is presumably meant to be a caricature of bourgeois definiteness and efficiency. He steamrollers through the flurried uncertainties of the narrator, the father and the girl, and the vulgar reader is thankful to see him do so. Has Mme Sarraute put him in to show that she can draw a character if she wants to? She certainly has a remarkable gift for catching the rhythms of spoken French. But I cannot say that I find the book easy to read or satisfactory in its final impression. I fail to see the point of the narrator, who is, I suppose, the unknown man whose portrait we are promised in the title. Why does the story of the uncomfortable, even cruel, relationship between father and daughter need to be told through the medium of his anonymous consciousness? As a matter of fact, he seems to disappear occasionally to be replaced by the omniscient voice of the "traditional" novelist; but whether this is deliberate or inadvertent is not deducible from the context. I agree that Mme Sarraute is saying something about the changing, unfinished nature of the relationship between a father and his daughter; I doubt whether it is of great interest or absolutely needs to be said in this particular way.

The "plot" of *Martereau* marks a step in the direction of clarity. The narrator, this time, is a delicate young man living in his uncle's household, again in the Paris bourgeois setting. The uncle and aunt maintain a state of more

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or less permanent conjugal warfare; she is shallow and cruel, he is bumbling and crass. The story, such as it is, concerns the purchase of a house on the outskirts of Paris. The uncle has a large amount of spare money which he wishes to spend quickly to avoid paying income tax. He asks a much less prosperous friend, Martereau, to buy a house for him with this money, but through an accident does not get a receipt. Martereau seems to want to hang on to the house and then, in the end, appears to relinquish it. It is not certain whether he is honest or dishonest.

The story is, once more, just a pretext to allow the author to describe the changing relationships within a small group of people. The ultra-sensitive narrator is a repetition of the anonymous observer of *Portrait d'un inconnu*, and I do not find him any more essential. He too fades out from time to time and the novelist quietly takes over to describe things that the narrator could not possibly know. But in this book there are some outstandingly good passages, in particular one of the best descriptions I have read of the painful, and almost spurious, pleasure of visiting a house one may, or may not, buy. Mme Sarraute admirably catches the interplay of attitudes between the three people who go off on this expedition; she shows how they are honest, or dishonest, with themselves and each other. The clash of character is also more interesting than in the previous book. Martereau, seen at first from the outside, appears definite and rounded in comparison with the other psychological quagmires, but he too eventually turns out to be no more certain in his characteristics than the uncle. Incidentally, I cannot see why the book should be called *Martereau*; it is true that he is the only character with a name, but he is not the central one.

The bourgeois obsession with property—already touched on in *Portrait d'un inconnu*, where the elderly father works himself into an enjoyable frenzy through imagining that his daughter is stealing his soap, and continued in *Martereau* in connection with the house—reaches a climax in *Le Planétarium*, which is largely about emotions centred on material objects. This time there is no narrator; we are inside each consciousness in turn and we gradually realise that there are three main characters: an elderly aunt living alone in a large flat and very upset because some workmen have put the wrong sort of handle on a new door she has had specially made; her nephew, Alain, who is living with his wife in a small flat and would like to exchange it for the aunt's large one; he is also a social climber and wants to impress the third character, Germaine, a society lady who is at the same time a writer. Alain and the aunt are both weak characters, whose moods oscillate wildly. In the end, Alain and his wife get the flat and Germaine comes to visit them there.

Another storm in a teacup, then; but as the narrator in *Martereau* says, speaking obviously for Mme Sarraute herself, "Storms in teacups are my great speciality." Never has a wooden door been discussed at such length in literature; Flaubert's elaborate paragraph on Charles Bovary's cap, or Balzac's minute account of the Pension Vauquer in *Le Père Goriot* or even Proust's variations on the hawthorn bushes, are outstripped by Mme Sarraute's treatment of the door, which assumes the importance of a character in the novel. But Mme Sarraute's obsession with "the object" is not quite the same as that of her fellow "New Novelist," Robbe-Grillet.[3] He defines objects with pseudo-frigidity in order to emphasise the mind's alienation from the material universe, or he uses certain objects as "objective correlatives" (T. S. Eliot's expression which he has accepted), *i.e.* as supports, or reference points, for emotions that they do not, properly speaking, symbolise. Mme Sarraute's objects are obviously meant to be futile receptacles for all the anguish of living. The elderly aunt, and then Alain, worry about the door because their minds are incapable of posing any metaphysical problem. The door is copied from one the aunt first saw in a church, where everything bored her until her eye lighted on the carved wooden surface set in a wall. There may be a satirical intention here; unbelieving French bourgeois are often fond of refectory tables from monasteries or fragments of carving from churches, without seeing that they fuss over them with an intensity that amounts to the worst form of idol worship—that is, the form which is neither religious nor truly aesthetic, but merely proprietary.[4] This, like the miser's passion, is a misplaced interest, and Mme Sarraute does it proud in terms of "tropisms." Here for instance, is the nephew producing an effect in society by giving an account of how his aunt rang him up at eleven o'clock at night to go and see how the workmen had bungled the fixing of the door:

> "I saw right away, as soon as I got there, that she was in a bad way. She looked fairly haggard.

[3] See the essay, "Alain Robbe-Grillet," in ENCOUNTER, March, 1962.

[4] This particular form of pointless "obsession with the object" crops up frequently in contemporary French culture. It is a major theme in a novel by Robert Pinget, *L'Inquisitoire*, and it is interestingly used by Alain Resnais in his latest film, *Muriel*. (See "The Obsessive Object," ENCOUNTER, July, 1962.)

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And the entire place was in what, for her, was terrible disorder; a can of furniture polish on the floor.... She let me in, a rag in her hand. Come and see, it's incredible what they've gone and done, your friend Renouvier is no good.... Look at the door.... I saw an awful new door such as you see everywhere, a pretentious, interior decorator's sort of door, which was there nobody knew why.... A mad idea she had had all of a sudden.... But I didn't say anything, it was too late, there was no longer any question of that... the fingerprint plaque had been removed and it had left holes in the wood, tiny marks that had been stopped up with putty and which she was rubbing, painting with all her might.... Almost weeping, she begged me.... Look... tell me the truth, I can't judge any more, I can't see anything but that.... The nail marks were undoubtedly visible.... If she had said nothing, I shouldn't have noticed anything, but now that she had told me.... It was, indeed, too bad, but there was no doubt about it, I did see them. Some devil must have prompted me, I couldn't help saying to her: Oh, if you don't think about it, you can hardly see anything, but now that you've told me, I do see the filled-in spots.... But so tiny... you have to know they're there.... But that was just it, that little defect, that minute flaw, the little wart on the face of perfection.... It must be dominated, annihilated, she must rub.... She stepped back.... And at moments, in certain lights, if you stood in certain places, you couldn't see anything, but then it would reappear, she couldn't see anything else... the door, the room itself, were gone, but the little round spots were there, her eyes guessed them, made them appear at regular intervals, counted them... it was torture... he hears their laughter, gentle chuckling, dove-cooing, a caress, an encouragement, a vote of thanks.... They allow themselves to be led, they let themselves go in brotherly fashion, and he feels that he is gaining in confidence, he would like to splash about and shake his feathers.... But do you know that, two years ago, she got like that for even less.... She noticed that a bit of wood had been scraped off her bed-post, the one against the wall... well, it had to be matched, filled in... and you could see it... or you couldn't.... She was constantly pulling the bed out. Finally she decided to replace the entire bed-post." (*The Planetarium.*)

WITH HER LATEST BOOK, *Les Fruits d'Or*, she breaks rather new ground, although still remaining within the same Parisian milieu. The hero—the blank hero, one might say—is not a wooden door but a new literary work that has just appeared. In a mosaic made up of fragments of interior monologue or dialogue, Mme Sarraute traces the various and changing reactions to this book, *Les Fruits d'Or*, which at first startles by its newness and then is finally discarded as old hat. The impression conveyed is that no one has really understood it; the book has been thrown into the Parisian literary pond and has produced a series of croakings, all of which are more or less irrelevant and indicative of the tropisms of the public in its relations with itself rather than of any critical appreciation. The theme may be meant to have some connection with the reception of the "New Novel" and, as such, should perhaps be taken as a dreadful warning to anyone so bold as to write about Mme Sarraute. However, I can only record my opinion that it is an interesting exercise which, in the last resort, fails to carry conviction. The flaw may be that the nature of *Les Fruits d'Or* is never suggested, even by implication, and so we can hardly judge how appropriate or inappropriate the reactions are; the book is ingenious but has a hollow in the middle.

IT WILL BE clear that, although I have the highest respect for Mme Sarraute as a person and an intelligence, she has not converted me to a belief in the "New Novel." As after reading Robbe-Grillet or Michel Butor, I am left with a feeling that a genuine impulse, valid within a limited field, has been generalised into a system which warps the writing, or at least makes it rather boring. More than one critic has said, of course, that the boringness of the "New Novel" is a feature of its authenticity. Whereas the old-fashioned novelist strove to entertain, to cut out the dull parts where nothing happens and to present even boring people as being amusing when seen from a particular angle, the best present-day writers (like some contemporary film-makers) do not cheat in this way; the boringness of their writing is meant to correspond exactly to the boringness of existence, so that if the aunt in *Le Planétarium* fusses about her door for pages on end, she is actually intended to be as excruciating as some old dear who corners you in real life. But it is difficult to accept the view that the "New Novelists" actively intend to bore. Ministers of religion and university teachers may be resigned to being professionally boring, artists cannot be, and Mme Sarraute speaks of the expression of artistic truth as being exciting. In any case, if the aim of art were simply to reproduce the boringness of life, there would be no need for it; life itself would suffice. It is much more likely that all art is intended to be a victory over boringness, through the substitution of a stylisation for the undifferentiated, unthinkable muddle of living. All art *is*, of course, a stylisation, absolute realism being logically impossible, since life could be totally rendered only by life itself. Mme Sarraute, like every other novelist, is offering us a stylisation, and if I find the

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"New Novel" stylisations unsatisfactory and rather wearisome, this must either be because I am too stupid to understand them (a lamentable circumstance beyond my control) or because the stylisations are leaving out something I feel to be essential. Why is it, for instance, that I am rather bored by the aunt in *Le Planétarium* but not by fussy old Miss Bates or Mr. Woodhouse in *Emma*? It must be because Miss Bates and Mr. Woodhouse are part of a philosophy I can accept, which is the ultimate pattern behind Jane Austen's books. This is not really connected with their being picturesque "characters," now out of date. They are mediocre enough to satisfy the most earnest 20th-century writer, and have hardly dated at all. Nor is it concerned with their having a part to play in the plot; Jane Austen's plots, although well-managed, are, like all plots, tedious once you have got to know them. The devices of the "traditional" novel are, after all, just the apparatus the writer is using to organise his or her field of perception. Jane Austen's organisation is not absolutely impeccable; she is exactly right about Miss Bates, I think, but too kind to Mr. Woodhouse. She is tainted with 18th-century sensibility, pre-Romantic flabbiness, misplaced piety, and ingrained snobbishness; but these defects are as nothing compared to the strong, even miraculous, clarity of vision which keeps them at bay. In the last resort, her books break down into "the good bits" and the traditional or inferior passages which only serve as bridges from one good bit to the next. Fortunately, the good bits are numerous enough to make one feel happy and excited, during the process of reading, at being able to borrow her strength of mind. With the "New Novel," I feel that the good bits, such as the visit to the house in *Martereau*, are too few and far between; most of the time, I am being told the obvious, plainly and minutely, and what I would really like to know about the author's mind is being, almost perversely, withheld.

Something missing in all the books, except *Les Fruits d'Or*, is a shape (but even in *Les Fruits d'Or* the shape is not organic; it is engineered from without). I am not asking for an abhorred and old-fashioned "plot," because I agree that the story element is often the least interesting part of a novel. But æsthetic shape means that the artist knows which parts of the work are most important for his sensibility and intelligence. Mme Sarraute's attempt to catch the tiniest movements of the sensibility all the time seems to involve a destruction of perspective. She often appears to be needling away at the fabric of perception to no purpose, just as Robbe-Grillet or Butor will describe some object at inordinate length and leave the reader wondering: "Why this object and not any other of an indefinite number of objects?" In a good, "traditional" novel, "characters" do not occur just because the author is adopting facile stereotypes, but because character is a function of perspective. We see people as "characters" in proportion as they are remote from us. The subjective consciousness cannot see itself as a character because it is aware of itself as a welter of conflicting tropisms, but it is always living in an improvised, real-life novel, peopled by characters of greater of lesser complexity and definiteness. The fact that I see a given person as a stereotype is no less "true" than the fact that he himself inevitably looks upon himself as anything but a stereotype. Miss Bates is a stereotype when looked at from Emma's point of view, but ceases to be a stereotype in the moment of self-awareness when she apologises for being the fussy old chatterer she has suddenly realised she is. Emma herself, being the heroine, is never entirely a stereotype, etc. This whole problem is magnificently studied and demonstrated by Proust and, frankly, I cannot see what the "New Novelists" add to his great achievement. There are lots of dead bits in his work and he is not always completely in control of his magnifying apparatus, but I can think of no one who has managed to describe "tropisms" on such a scale while incorporating them into a general statement about life. I disagree about his characters being now worthy of relegation to a sort of literary Mme Tussaud's. For the most part, the characters, whether complex or flat, are still very much alive, though of course they could not be re-invented to-day with the same historical and social details, because the world they belonged to has disappeared. Only certain of Proust's ideas or manias have become defunct, or were still-born even at the time of writing.

By using the phrase "a general statement about life," I have come out into the open as the sort of pedant who wants a writer to say something, whereas, according to Robbe-Grillet, "a writer is someone who has nothing to say." My suspicion is that Mme Sarraute has something to say but that she is not saying it fully.

After all, her four novels can be read as a critique, monotonous in its ruthlessness, of Parisian, middle-class *mauvaise foi*—a critique, moreover, conducted mainly by means of interior monologue and, heaven knows, the interior monologue, even chopped up into very short phrases, is as dated and as artificial a convention as any. There would be nothing wrong with Mme Sarraute's use of it, if she included in her books some indication of the

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nature of the "authenticity," in the light of which she is presumably stigmatising *la mauvaise foi*. As in the café, I have to sit and wait without being told what an active form of living might be. Here again, it is not a question of asking for an old-fashioned "message," but of knowing what balance the artist is striking between the various tensions of life. If "tropisms" are pure responses to stimuli, the universe Mme Sarraute is describing is deterministic, and indeed the impression of claustrophobia her novels produce in me comes, I think, from the fact that her characters, however subtle their twitchings, are entirely passive. They never initiate anything; their emotions, which are consistently repulsive or contemptible, wash this way or that without the intervention of any act of conscience, as opposed to mere consciousness.

Now the "New Novelists," generally speaking, have eliminated morality as being an antiquated encumbrance. The word is crude, I admit, and the phenomenon infinitely mysterious, and if any writer wants to be an out-and-out determinist, good luck to him or her. But it is impossible to be both a determinist and to convey moral disapproval of behaviour, as though one were standing outside the world one is describing—unless, of course, the writer argues that his moral disapproval is itself predetermined, and this lands him in an infinite regress. Mme Sarraute has moral feelings; one has only to talk to her to see that this is so, and her books imply the most traditional French form of social, intellectual, and æsthetic contempt for the bourgeois class to which she belongs. What is lacking in the "reality" described in her books is a most important one: the positive manifestation of the conscience which is passing the unfavourable judgment.

From

From Our Dark Continent

IV

Sepulchre

(*for a picture*)

Mesembrianthemums
Find no footing on those rocks;
Spread wide like ancient wrinkled hands
The alien deserts map their scars, flood stocks
Wave upon wave of lava-flowing bands
Their convolutions dammed, rear high
A kind of monument that Gaudi might have planned.

This huge serpula fractures and invades the sky;
No moon, no stars, nothing to beautify
The scene, nor man-wrought shape to dignify
The final sepulchre.

How did you come, wild heart, here to be lying,
No friend to witness or sing of your manner of dying.

Valentine Dobrée

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FILM

Fellini's Double City

By Eric Rhode

"IF I WERE to make a film about the life of a sole," said Federico Fellini, "it would end up by being about me...." One would like to call his bluff; but one sees what he means. No other director has an ego so inflated, no other director's work is so directly autobiographical. The *oeuvre* is like a poet's diary, continually in search of something, immensely consistent in its development of themes.

The nature of this search is made clear in his latest film, *"8½."* Guido Anselmi, the film director, is depressed and confined to a spa; he is unable to work on his most recent project, and he is surrounded by a group of seemingly hostile figures. But fortunately his surroundings evoke memories of the past—he is haunted by suggestions of some half-forgotten beauty—and his companions cannot trouble him too deeply. When his scriptwriter objects to the scenario of the coming film, Guido has the presence of mind to realise that his kind of film cannot be created through the dictates of theory. "Do you support the Catholics or the Communists?" asks a critic. But of course the question is far too simple. Like a man trapped in a car, Guido must try to free himself, especially from mere doctrine. His art, he realises, must include all his past obsessions, all that makes up his present self. The irrational must enter so that the web of false symbolism, of false meanings, may be destroyed and the true candid images emerge. "Are all lies and truth the same to you?" cries his wife. To which Guido might answer that lies and evasions are part of his search for the authentic self.

And so, though Fellini/Anselmi fears his critics—and in fantasy imagines them as driving him to suicide—he does finally manage to reject their taunts and exhortations. "I am what I am and not what I want to be...." Much as Proust was unable to explain why the *petite madeleine* brought him such ecstasy (and took an unconscionable time in doing so); Fellini/Anselmi likewise is unable to discover why his images bring him such happiness. A magician summons up those inexplicably fascinating, personal images of people he can only love when they become part of himself, and these people join him in the glittering circus of childhood memory. Only then, as the circle is completed, can Fellini/Anselmi see how these images shore him against his ruin, and save him and his boyhood self—a child who plays the piccolo against the encroaching darkness.

FELLINI LIKES greatly to use Roman Catholic ritual to suit his own ends; and *"8½,"* perhaps purposely, takes the form of a confession. In this Fellini reminds us of another lapsed Roman Catholic. "Wilde," writes W. H. Auden, "is the classic case of a man who wants to be loved for himself alone.... Nothing is clearer in the history of the three trials than his unconscious desire that the truth should come out." Fellini also assumes that to know all is to forgive all; there is nothing like a good confession for washing our dirty linen whiter than white. What is so cavalier about such magic—as used in a work of art anyway—is that Fellini/Anselmi expects us to condone everything. He tries to give the impression that he is the only real, lovable human being; because of which he feels free, like Madame Ranevsky, to let everyone down. Fellini/Anselmi in short is unable to make the distinction between the truths of the mind, in which lies and evasions are part of the totality, and the clearly knowable truths of behaviour.

One would be unfair, though, to doubt the courage of Fellini's confession. Quite justly his persona in *"8½"* feels persecuted by the critics. Most critics have been grudging in their praise of Fellini, and quite a number of them—those at any rate who are Marxist nannies—have taken a great pleasure in giving him a regular thwacking. "He has," said one of them, making him sound like a lunatic, "a sickening lack of mental firmness, of fundamental moral aliveness and

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of taste." "Out of this charivari of cruelty and gloom, of subtle malice and sentimentality, of introspection and of half-baked mysticism," said another, "emerges a persistent note of squalor."

The Italian tongue lends itself to superb invective, and Fellini's critics haven't spared themselves in exploiting this bias. But why are they so antagonistic towards him? Could it be that the world doesn't love a self-lover? In part maybe; but the truth of the matter, I would say, is that these critics see Fellini as "a traitor to neo-realism."

It is difficult to see on what grounds they can so describe him. Neo-realism was more a state of mind than a worked out theory; "a sense of expectation" said Fellini, and that is as good a definition as any. In 1943 Umberto Barbaro, a professor at the *Centro Sperimentale* Film School in Rome, made a highly rhetorical attack on Fascist rhetoric. He wanted, he claimed, a new kind of film that would rid itself of "those grotesque fabrications which exclude human problems and the human point of view." Neo-realism was to be an attempt to show things *as they were*, and not as the religious or the secular authorities wanted them to be. The call was liberal, and it was a call to individual responsibility. "The reality buried under myths slowly reflowered. Here was a tree; here a house; here a man eating, a man sleeping, a man crying," wrote De Sica's scriptwriter, Cesare Zavattini.

Zavattini realised, one assumes, that this urge to escape artifice was as old as art—and that in the cinema it goes back as far as Lumière's brief sequence of a train steaming into a station. The exuberance with which the Italian filmmakers surveyed, as though for the first time, the cold, wet, luminous world of the post-war years was new however. There was a sense of rebirth; like the prisoners in *Fidelio*, these directors had come up into the light: partisans sink noiselessly beneath the bland waters of the Po, a father watches his hungry son devour a plate of spaghetti.... "What De Sica can do, I can't do," boomed Orson Welles. "I ran his *Shoeshine* over recently and the camera disappeared, the screen disappeared; it was just life...."

But alas life, pure life, when found unadulterated in a work of art becomes something of a bore; and neo-realism, though its originators didn't seem to realise it, was no more than that dullest form of art, naturalism. "The first concern of the naturalistic writer," said Zola, "will be to collect his material and to find out what he can about the world he wants to describe.... When all the material has been gathered, the novel will take place of its own accord."

"Of its own accord"—with this simple phrase Zola manages to slip round the central problem of form. Such a legerdemain applies also to the neo-realists. None of them ever approached Zavattini's ideal of filming ninety consecutive minutes in a man's life; artistically speaking the project was far from feasible. They merely poured new insights into old forms; *Bicycle Thieves*, for instance, has the form of a well-made play, while *La Terra Trema* has the form of a socialist realist novel. Moreover, though De Sica and Zavattini make humanist claims, they regress into child-cult and into an Augustinian despair at man's inability to solve his own problems. Visconti also lapses—in his case into the dialectic of history. The authority of Fascism gives way to the authority of the Vatican and the Kremlin. If anyone was treacherous, it was these directors surely. They lacked the technique —and possibly the will—to confront, as individuals, the problems of the post-war world.

Rossellini, who was probably the most liberal of these directors, shares their failure. In *Roma, Città Aperta* "everything," asserts Franco Valorba, "was raised to an abstract ideal of liberty versus tyranny. But liberty from what and for what? And tyranny from what and for what?" Not only is the German intention left unexplored but, more seriously, "both priest and communist use the same concepts of liberty, patriotism, and justice; each of them uses these concepts in a different way, yet each of them is unaware of the difference."

Neo-realism was based on the assumption that I-am-a-camera, and that the camera never lies—well, not so long as *I* handle it. This epistemological naïveté is endearing and somehow suits the excitement of a new age. But it could not last. There was a financial crisis; bliss faded as the dawn gave way to the complexities of day. The neo-realists fumbled, and some of the old guard were unable to cope with the challenge. Those who did however had to learn that the eye is more than a camera, and that our perceptions involve the need for discrimination; only then was the movement able to flower for a second, and perhaps more magnificent time.

Because of this, Fellini's search for the authentic self through fantasy takes on a historical significance. It may be no more than a coincidence that he directed his first feature in 1952, the year of the financial and ideological crisis; but I doubt it. If there had been no Fellini, we would have had to invent him. All the same, Fellini's interest for us doesn't lie alone in his concern for the inner world of fantasy which

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becomes tedious when divorced from the outer world; nor does it lie in his ability to "analyse sentiments"; Antonioni was already doing that in 1951, with *Cronaca di un Amore*, and with considerably more precision.

Antonioni and Fellini: a little like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Henry James and Dickens, they represent those polarities of experience which often seem to arise when an art form is at its peak. Ardent admirers of one are seldom ardent admirers of both. One remembers the bickering over *L'Avventura* and *La Dolce Vita*: Antonioni was "the more mature" said some, Fellini was "the more exuberant," said others. Certainly Fellini cannot match Antonioni's insight into the sex-war. He is too much in love with himself for his lovers (well, his women anyway) to be more than stereotypes. There is something sick about his idea of love too, which is completely sexless. The recurring situation in an Antonioni film is of a man trying to resolve a love-battle by what Wyndham Lewis calls "amorous treatment, vigorously administered"; with Fellini however we have the eunuch, be it clown or half-wit, at the centre of the scene. This anti-eroticism disinfects everything. Sexual disorder was a central theme in *La Dolce Vita* —and although the eunuch has an assured place in tragedy ("an achieved calm"), his role in such a study, surely, should have been peripheral. The result was bizarre, to say the least; one felt that Aunt Edna was working out a blueprint for an orgy in Highgate.

Fellini is very much an intuitive director, improvising on the floor, making up his mind at the last moment. ("To trap fleeting reality, one must avoid any suspicion of cold technique.") This spontaneity, egotism, and clearly neurotic reluctance to handle adult themes tempts one to describe his work in psychoanalytic terms—and no doubt such an approach would tell us a great deal about the structure of his mind. But it would fail to tell us much, if anything, about the quality of his intelligence —his talent, if you will—and it is this singular quality which gives his films their importance and justifies our interest in them.

We are in the presence of an archaic mind, which is, perhaps, unconscious of its singularity. Like a long-legged fly upon the stream, this mind moves over landscape and seashore, town and city, attuned to local texture and mood, remarkably sensible to each difference. Localities stimulate it more than anything else, yet the stimulus is more than one of atmosphere: many of these localities arouse an awe and a sense of communion which are best described as mystical. In *La Strada*, Gelsomina, the half-crazed travelling player, communes with trees and telegraph poles; the world is sacred to her though she doesn't understand why. She meets an acrobat who is as blessed as herself, an angelic fool with whom she falls in love; and during their one moment of confrontation he tells her, echoing Hamlet, that everything in the world, even the smallest pebble, has a meaning. Shortly before her death Gelsomina is found clinging to a pebble as though it were an emblem of her faith.

Like D. H. Lawrence, Fellini has a feeling for the genius of a place—for those gods and daemons who inhabit a specific locality. These gods are older and wilder than the Christian God; they are pagan gods, often nameless, often the dark gods celebrated by Lawrence. But unlike Lawrence, Fellini never uses these gods as a major theme; it is as though he lacked the courage of his intuition. In *La Dolce Vita* a wild woman, possibly a medium, says that "Italy is a land full of ancient cults." She is one of a crowd of spectators waiting in a field for two children to carry out a faith-healing performance —the children claim to have had a vision of the Virgin Mary on this spot. But rain falls; the spectators flee, and the sick and lame are drenched. For Fellini the genius of a place can be illusive, can fail us, can be sometimes no more than a conceit.

Yet everything—his visual brilliance, his flair for atmosphere and mood—stems from locality. The castle at Bassano di Sutri, shrouded by night, with its Roman busts and its hollow stone rooms, is the scene for a cult of the dead. A party is in progress. Aristocrats, some of them slumbering, some of them dancing as though drugged, rise up before us like totems—enchanted, burdened by some abstracted despair for which their ancestors alone know the reason. A great door wheels open, and we see round a table princelings and sycophants gathered in the eerie rituals of a seance, seeking from the past some understanding of the present. At the end of a hall is a whispering well; voices carry from room to room a disembodied, false declaration of love. A masque of death: at dawn the guests proceed across a lawn and up a Palladian staircase, the women's gowns as elaborate as those worn at the court of Henri VI. Then the dead awaken: the family priest appears at the end of the garden, and the noble family, as though drawn by a thread, follow him to celebrate mass. Ruefully the other guests depart.

Some localities recur and obsess; one feels that Fellini has often journeyed through them, if not physically, at least in mind. If we were to draw a map of these localities we would find that they made a consistent world of the imagination. We would

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find, too, that this world had one broad division: between the provinces and the city.

Fellini was born and brought up in Rimini, and the provinces of his imagination have the bleakness of the Adriatic coast. (Though one should add perhaps that his most complete study of provincial life, *I Vitelloni,* was filmed at Viareggio, probably to release his powers of invention.) These provinces sub-divide into various regions, the most primitive of which is a rocky mountainside, studded with desolate crofts. Peasants, as flinty as their surroundings, inhabit these crofts: they are remote, dehumanised and speak an alien tongue; yet they are not without kindness. Zampanò, the Caliban of *La Strada*, perpetually returns to this mountainside, as though it were the one place he might call home.

Fellini appears to associate this place with memories of earliest childhood; the ages of man become a microcosm of the world's history, and we are here at the beginning of creation. The ASA NISI MASA sequence in *"8½"* gave us the most complete picture of this place: a primeval crone, her head concealed in a balaclava, sleeps in a high chair; sustained chords of music in a minor key shift and change; and there is a terrible sense of desolation and of loss. Playing children are the one sign of life, yet their games are no more than glimpsed at, and remain as enigmatic as their laughter. The whole region presents us with a mystery; here the gangster Augusto in *II Bidone* is left to die beside a mountain path and dying is redeemed as he sees peasants toil up this path; here, too, Gelsomina finds redemption. Yet the climate has nothing exotic about it; the air is fresh, clumps of snow melt between the rocks, and from a nearby monastery a bell sounds clearly. Many of the regions Fellini describes are familiar to us; none is so unusual as this mountainside with its aura of mystery and its deep sense of peace; none so extends our sensibility.

A SIMILAR MYSTERY, perhaps a more theatrical one, bathes the provincial town at night: newspapers swirl round the piazza and lights sway in turbulent alleys. In *I Vitelloni* especially, where the five layabouts represent (we assume) various aspects of the youthful Fellini—though some of them are aged close on thirty—the provincial town is viewed through the eyes of adolescents. At night there is promise of exciting encounters or, less idealistically, of pick-ups in cinemas. But at dawn, after the carnival, this promise proves to be deceptive: the thought of love turns bitter when Alberto's sister runs away with a crook; ambitions sink back into torpor. By light of day the provincial town shows itself as oppressive.

Yet the town is not without its gods, and these are often admirable. Fellini idealises the provincial father, showing him as an honest, straightforward, *good* man who worships the gods of morality. But such a life is too dour for Fellini's layabouts; they crave for an easy life, for gods more exotic and more central to their needs. Bored, they stand on a jetty and contemplate the sea.

This seascape is familiar to us; it recurs more than any other Fellini locality—and it is the one locality that cries out for a symbolic interpretation. In this case it represents both the inner turbulence of the *vitelloni*—it spews up strange fish—and also, more importantly, it represents reality itself—all that baffles the understanding and chills the imagination.

The layabouts want to escape; yet at the film's end only one of them does so, the sensitive ingenuous Moraldo. As his train pulls out of the station, an elegant series of travelling shots show us his friends asleep in bed. Perhaps these friends are sensible in not trying to realise their dreams; for though Moraldo may throw off the torpor of provincial life, his awakening will lead to disillusionment. The sequel to *I Vitelloni* was to have been *Moraldo in Città*, in which Moraldo was supposed to have fallen amongst con-men and tricksters. In time this sequel became the less dramatic but no less disillusioned *La Dolce Vita*.

The city, of course, is Rome; and the warring gods of this city preoccupy Fellini more than any other. Who are they, these gods? In *"8½"* Fellini/Anselmi asks a cardinal how he can find happiness, and is answered by a quotation from the eunuch Origen—only through the church can truth be found. He is then offered the uncompromising choice: *civitas dei* or *civitas diaboli*. We cut at once to a fashionable street and to the glamour of Cianciano. Guido has chosen damnation; but rightly so, perhaps, for he does find a temporary happiness in his images, in his dream of an innocent girl—a girl called, almost inevitably, Cardinale.

"FOR FREUD, as for everyone else in the world, Rome means two things," Ernest Jones writes in his biography. "There is ancient Rome whose culture gave birth to European civilisation. Then there is Christian Rome that destroyed and supplanted the older one. This could only be an enemy to him... but then an enemy always comes between oneself and the loved object."

For Fellini also, Rome is a double city whose allegiances cannot be reconciled. If we exclude the mediocre *Luci di Varietà*, which he co-directed with Alberto Lattuada, we find this conflict plays a major part in his first feature,

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Lo Sciecco Bianco (*The White Sheikh*). Two provincials, Oscar and Wanda Cavalli, come to Rome on a honeymoon, on the last day of which they hope to attend a Papal audience. Wanda is a secret reader of *fumetti*, those Italian serials told in photographs, and is infatuated with the hero of one of these serials, The White Sheikh. Very much wanting to meet her idol, she slips off to the *fumetti* office on her first morning in Rome. By chance she passes a staircase down which actors in costume are descending. She is enchanted—to her the actors appear to be fabulous Bedouins and houris—and when some of them invite her to join them on a trip to the seaside where they are shooting the latest episode, she willingly agrees. And there, by the pitiless sea, she meets her white sheikh and is disillusioned—the sheikh turns out to be a philanderer. The girl runs away from the troupe and eventually returns to her husband. In the final scene she and her husband are reconciled, and hand in hand wend their way, not out of Eden, but across St. Peter's Square and towards the Pope, beneath the benediction of stone angels.

This final scene, though moving, is unsatisfactory. The couple may be reconciled, but their reconciliation is childlike and seems an unlikely basis for a happy marriage. Nor can one believe that Fellini wants the Pope to win over the White Sheikh—the enemy has come between him and the loved object. He is uneasy; he too is attracted to an apparently indefensible glamour. And because he is unable to defend this impulse he is forced to take refuge with the stone angels and the morality of the provincial fathers. His uneasiness shows itself in malice: he ridicules the *Bersaglieri* as they trot past in all their finery, and he exposes almost masochistically the shabbiness of the *fumetti* actors. One critic (John Coleman) has justly claimed that Fellini is obsessed with the mediocre and the second-rate. Taking this a step further one could say that Fellini needs to destroy the metropolitan, to turn it into the provincial; if he cannot belong to the glamorous city, he must rob it of its glamour.

THOUGH *civitas diaboli* may win out in his later films, Fellini continues to feel uneasy about it. Many people saw *La Dolce Vita* as a pæan to the pleasures of an orgy, and ignored the irony of the title. Certainly there were "pornographic moments," as regular as those in an Olympia Press novel and just as often fluffed, but the *tone* of the film was one of condemnation; one was reminded of the William Hickey column with its hypocritical prudery. The astounding success of *La Dolce Vita* can be put down, I think, to this effete dallying with *civitas diaboli*. Much of the action was incredible, yet many people swallowed it whole. One wonders why. Could it be that urban man has begun to accept the values of the popular press as a norm? Could it be that its eroticism and violence, its glitter and spangles, have become for him a kind of Nature?

However, Fellini's passion for unusual faces and for first-night crowds has another dimension. In *"8½"* someone says that "it all stems from Scott Fitzgerald." But even this is true only in part. Fitzgerald was attracted by the golden dream—by "the extraordinary gift for hope, the romantic readiness" that lay beneath the dusty exterior of the Jazz Age. Fellini's obsession with glamour is far more primitive than Fitzgerald's, and is close to the *grammer* of witchcraft.

The "smart" people and the film stars who make Roman society have the power of pagan gods; when the prostitute Cabiria is picked up by her favourite star she is unable to touch him. Indeed these people *are* pagan gods. When some of them first appear they are seen in mid-air, like icons of Christ in ascension: the White Sheikh is on a swing, Gelsomina's acrobat is on a tightrope, and the legendary Anita Ekberg descends from an aeroplane like a *diva ex machina*. Anita, of course, is Aphrodite or Venus, and quite the best thing in *La Dolce Vita*; she transforms *civitas dei* into her own kingdom as she paddles in the Fontana dei Trevi or walks down alleys with a kitten on her head. Through her the conflict between the two aspects of the city takes on visual complexity. Dressed as a cardinal she climbs to the top of the trembling dome of St. Peter's and is goddess of all she surveys until her cardinal's hat is blown away—and rising up before the camera, blots out the city. *Civitas dei* remains omnipotent, though its inner sanctuary may be penetrated.

This omnipotence is rapidly diminished in "The Temptation of Dr. Antonio," Fellini's episode in *Boccaccio '70*. Here Anita is without doubt a goddess whose glamour is witchcraft. She appears as a thirty-foot advertisement for milk, posted before the window of the prim and pious doctor. He is shocked by this exhibitionism and throws ink at the giantess. Enraged, she comes to life and teases him into submission by wreathing him in tulle and by dangling him over her capacious bosom. *Civitas diaboli* wins the day; but as one might infer from this grotesque situation, the victory is hardly one to be gloated over.

DOES FELLINI describe *civitas dei*, or is its presence merely felt by absence? One ex-

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ample suggests an answer. Fellini, we know, likes to secularise church ritual, especially processions. In *La Strada*, Gelsomina watches four happy clowns dance along by a ditch playing fantastic musical instruments (similar figures appear at the end of *"8½"*). By contrast, we cut to a religious procession: trumpets bray, the crowd bows before holy images, and the earth trembles. Our sense of *terribilità* is only diminished a little by the brief shot of a pig, crucified in a butcher's window.

The reason for this fear and disrespect of the Church is given in *"8½,"* where priests are shown as tormenting the child Anselmi into impotence. This is a fairly weak argument, and no doubt Fellini is being unjust to the Church. Still, no one would ever claim that Fellini's view of things was a balanced one. His is a religious mind, alienated from any particular religion, unable to conceive of a liberal, secular city (cf. his one agnostic intellectual, introduced by the characteristic line, "Thanks to Father Franz I've at last found this ancient Sanskrit grammar. I've been looking for it everywhere"). All the same, we would be wrong to think there was only one choice: between the terror of the Church and the hell of the *beau monde*; though this primitivism—fulfilled in the baroque style, the vividly etched images, the thunder and lightning—is powerful certainly, and reminds us of the Polish Marxist, Andrej Wajda, who is also ensnared in a Roman Catholic past. (It reminds us too of Verdi, on whom Fellini, with his absurd anachronistic hat, has obviously modelled himself.)

Nonetheless, Fellini would probably agree with St. Augustine that *civitas dei* is not to be found in the Church alone, if at all. In so far as it does manifest itself on earth, *civitas dei* is to be found in the lives of holy innocents—holy because they are in touch with the gods of the ancient Italian countryside. Some of them are religious: monks and nuns living in isolated communities, even the awesome cardinal who reads legends into a bird's song. Some of them are innocents in spite of themselves: the "Umbrian angel," the station master's boy. But unfortunately this concept of innocence doesn't bear much close attention. We cannot believe in Gelsomina's madness nor in Cabiria's purity; we are conscious merely of the actress trying to sustain both character and symbol, and failing in both.

"When Pastoral fails," William Empson wrote, "it takes refuge in child-cult." The neo-realists often fail in this way. The De Sica-Zavattini combine, for instance, uses child-cult to escape from dealing with social problems on an adult level. The same is true of Fellini. If we understand by innocence an idealised state of mind where guilt and anxiety have no place, then we must see Fellini's dream of innocence as escapist. Too often he tries to flee from the pressure of experience, nowhere more obviously than at the end of *La Dolce Vita*, where he retreats into a mawkish symbolism. Still, one has difficulty in dismissing this scene —as one has difficulty in dismissing anything of Fellini's. Though the characters may appear as false, the locality in which they breathe is so deeply realised that it takes on the clarity of vision—as figures move like dryads between the pine trees or wave to each other before a mysterious prospect of the sea.

Image

Sealed as the eye
Within its socket,
Bound by skull bone
I see you yet

Alone as the wind
Howling in a place
Where no one passes.

Samuel Menashe

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Theodore Roethke

Journey to the Interior

I

In the long journey out of the self,
There are many detours, washed-out interrupted raw places
Where the shale slides dangerously
And the back wheels hang almost over the edge
At the sudden veering, the moment of turning.
Better to hug close, wary of rubble and falling stones.
The arroyo cracking the road, the wind-bitten buttes, the canyons,
Creeks swollen in midsummer from the flash-flood roaring into the narrow valley.
Reeds beaten flat by wind and rain,
Grey from the long winter, burnt at the base in late summer.
—Or the path narrowing,
Winding upward toward the stream with its sharp stones,
The upland of alder and birch trees,
Through the swamp alive with quicksand,
The way blocked at last by a fallen fir-tree,
The thickets darkening,
The ravines ugly.

II

I remember how it was to drive in gravel,
Watching for dangerous down-hill places, where the wheels whined beyond eighty—
When you hit the deep pit at the bottom of the swale,
The trick was to throw the car sideways and charge over the hill, full of the throttle,
Grinding up and over the narrow road, spitting and roaring.
A chance? Perhaps. But the road was part of me, and its ditches,
And the dust lay thick on my eyelids,—Who ever wore goggles?—
Always a sharp turn to the left past a barn close to the roadside,
To a scurry of small dogs and a shriek of children,
The highway ribboning out in a straight thrust to the North,
To the sand dunes and fish flies, hanging, thicker than moths,
Dying brightly under the street lights sunk in coarse concrete,
The towns with their high pitted road-crowns and deep gutters,
Their wooden stores of silvery pine and weather-beaten red courthouses,
An old bridge below with a buckled iron railing, broken by some idiot plunger;
Underneath, the sluggish water running between weeds, broken wheels, tyres, stones.
And all flows past—
The cemetery with two scrubby trees in the middle of the prairie,
The dead snakes and muskrats, the turtles gasping in the rubble,
The spiky purple bushes in the winding dry creek bed—
The floating hawks, the jackrabbits, the grazing cattle—
I am not moving but they are,
And the sun comes out of a blue cloud over the Tetons,

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While, farther away, the heat-lightning flashes.
I rise and fall in the slow sea of a grassy plain,
The wind veering the car slightly to the right,
Whipping the line of white laundry, bending the cottonwoods apart,
The scraggly wind-break of a dusty ranch-house.
I rise and fall, and time folds
Into a long moment;
And I hear the lichen speak,
And the ivy advance with its white lizard feet—
On the shimmering road,
On the dusty detour.

III

Between the rising and the falling.
Between the lifting and the relinquishing,
Between the swung rope of the bell,
And the full peal of sound across the field over the broad valley,
Between the first trembling of the wren's throat and the burst of song from the hedgerow,
In the moment of time when the small drop forms, but does not fall,
I have known the heart of the sun,—
In the dark and light of a dry place,
In a flicker of fire brisked by a dusty wind.
I have heard, in a drip of leaves,
A slight song,
After the midnight cries.
I see the flower of all water, above and below me, the never receding,
Moving, unmoving in a parched land, white in the moonlight:
The soul at a still-stand,
At ease after rocking the flesh to sleep,
Petals and reflections of petals mixed on the surface of a glassy pool,
And the waves flattening out when the fishermen drag their nets over the stones.
I rehearse myself for this:
The stand at the stretch in the face of death,
Delighting in surface change, the glitter of light on waves,
And I roam elsewhere, my body thinking,
Turning toward the other side of light,
In a tower of wind, a tree idling in air,
Beyond my own echo,
Neither forward nor backward,
Unperplexed, in a place leading nowhere.

As a blind man, lifting a curtain, knows it is morning,
I know this change:
On one side of silence there is no smile;
But when I breathe with the birds,
The spirit of wrath becomes the spirit of blessing,
And the dead begin from their dark to sing in my sleep.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Testing

PARKINSON'S famous laws do not cover the whole of social behaviour. There is a genuine need for an addition. The more important the implications are of some political or social action, the less likely is the discussion about this action to be influenced by factual information. It may be deduced as a theorem that vital decisions will be made in complete disregard of the facts, and often on the basis of emotion pure and simple. The discussion centering around the famous "11+" (so called presumably because it is taken at the age of 11–) presents an excellent illustration of this law. Protagonists have taken up positions for and against the use of psychological tests, have praised or decried the notion of the Intelligence Quotient, and have pilloried psychologists taking part in these selection procedures, all with a becoming absence of knowledge of the facts of the case. When the British Psychological Society set up a Working Party which produced an excellent factual statement, this was rightly disregarded by everyone—on the principle of "don't confuse me with facts, my mind is made up!"

What are the facts, then? The first fact to be faced is that all discussion of retaining or abandoning the 11+ is fraudulent if it refuses to deal with the most fundamental question of all: is our educational system to remain restrictionist or is it to be expansionist? At the moment we are among the most restrictionist countries in the world, and we may compare with advantage our practices with those current in the United States, one of the most expansionist. Obviously not everyone can, or wants to, continue education up to advanced University level; this is equally true in the U.S.A. as in the U.K. Restriction comes in when the relatively small number who genuinely desire further or better education are prevented from obtaining it by external barriers or hurdles. By "external" I mean here specially designed examinations, such as the 11+, or the admission procedures which precede acceptance of candidates by a University. These may be contrasted with "internal" barriers; students who fail their high school courses will not be accepted by any university in the U.S., and students who fail their first-year university courses will not be allowed to continue. The difference is clearly that the American student has tried and failed; the English student has often been prevented from trying by some external obstacle. Of course there are some external obstacles in the U.S.A., too, particularly as far as the best-known universities are concerned; they can (and do) pick and choose. But in most States the prospective student with his high-school diploma has a legal right to be admitted to his State University; there is no absolute bar if he is turned down by Harvard or Yale.

H. J. EYSENCK *is Professor of Psychology, University of London, and Director of the Psychological Department at the Maudsley Hospital. He is the author of "Uses and Abuses of Psychology," "Sense and Nonsense in Psychology," and "Know Your Own I.Q.," all in Penguin editions.*

RESTRICTION IN THIS country used to be in monetary terms; the Universities could cope with the influx because this was cut down drastically by ability to pay. Similar factors cut down grammar-school type education. Now that this obstacle has, to some extent, been removed, recourse is had to psychological and educational tests. This is inevitable as long as we refuse to expand education to keep pace with demand. Recent committee reports have powerfully argued for such expansion, and I believe that a continuation of restrictionist policies is suicidal; England can only survive as a great power if the most is made of its reservoir of skill, knowledge, and brain power.

However that may be, some degree of restriction will be with us for many years to come; the requisite educational facilities cannot be built in one day. What place do psychological tests have during this (we hope) transitional period? Their main advantage is twofold. In the first place, tests are objective; they pay no attention to a candidate's personality, or his accent, or his working-class background. Teachers' subjective recommendations, however honestly given, cannot but be coloured by irrelevant considerations of this kind. (They do, of course, often give invaluable additional information about the educational motivation of the child, the parental support for educational aims, and other factors relevant to future success.) This also means that tests can be improved by research; we can weed out bad items or types of test, and substitute better. It is very difficult to see how such improvements could be made with subjective recommendations given by individual teachers.

In the second place, tests of ability attempt to disregard attainment and measure rather *innate*

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ability. This ability may or may not be discernible in attainment; it is too frequently masked by factors such as disinterest in school work, lack of motivation, lack of facilities at home, or frequent absence due to illness or other causes. Do tests of mental ability in fact tap innate factors? The evidence is by now quite conclusive that they are surprisingly successful in doing so. Consider a recent study by James Shields, in which he administered two intelligence tests to groups of fraternal twins, brought up together, and to identical twins, some of whom had been brought up together, while some had been brought up separately. Identical twins share completely a common heredity, while fraternal twins are only 50 per cent alike with respect to heredity; on the tests the identical twins were found to be more than twice as similar to each other, whether brought up together or separate, than were the fraternal twins.

It will be obvious that, on the whole, the inclusion of intelligence tests will be of the greatest help to the working-class child handicapped (as far as attainment is concerned) by some of the factors just mentioned. It is ironical that it is usually from the political left that outcries against the use of intelligence tests have come; the omission of such tests, and their substitution by teachers' recommendations, would certainly *not* redound to the benefit of working-class children. As long as some degree of restriction remains in our educational system, so long will mental tests constitute the best safeguard for such children. (The abandoning of the "11+" by some local authorities does not, of course, mean the abandoning of selection; it simply replaces tests by some other procedure.)

SOME OF THE OBJECTIONS made against tests are justified, but not fatal.

(1) It is true that coaching and practice improve scores by perhaps up to 10 points of IQ; but it has been shown that when children have done a few tests in the past the limits of such effects has been reached. Further practice or coaching does not seem to help. Consequently all children should routinely be put through a number of tests before reaching the final test that really counts; in this way coaching could be rendered ineffectual.

(2) A single test may under certain circumstances fail to do justice to a given child; this could be circumvented by never relying on less than two or three tests, given at different times.

(3) The predictive accuracy of a test given at the early age of 10 years is not high enough to justify segregation for ever and ever. This point is perhaps the most crucial one, and deserves some discussion.

Much is known about the predictive accuracy of tests, and the constancy, or lack of constancy, of the IQ. The evidence does not justify extreme statements. The tests and their predictions are neither completely accurate, nor are they completely lacking in accuracy; their forecasting ability is surprisingly good, but certainly not good enough to justify a final, once-for-all decision about a child's future. There *are* "late developers," whose promise is not apparent on any present-day tests, and there are also children

• *New York*

WHEN *New York City last week decided to abolish group I.Q. tests in its public schools, the Board of Education acted on a controversy which has long been brewing across the country. The "test ban" was announced as an integration measure—in response to charges that the tests were middle-class-oriented and slanted against slum children, especially disadvantaged Negroes and Puerto Ricans.*

The Educational Testing Service in Princeton, N.J., a leading non-profit test-making organisation, has been commissioned to try to come up with a colour-blind test.

Mass testing, coupled often with slipshod interpretation at the hands of ill-trained teachers and counsellors, has long been under attack. In 1959, John Hersey published a stinging critique in a pamphlet, "Intelligence, Choice, and Consent." He charged that many schools, instead of using such tests merely as "rough screening devices," actually permit children to be labelled by inaccurate and misleading numbers.

Hillel Black, in his recent book, "They Shall Not Pass," described a case which, though extreme, showed with heart-rending drama how a New York school administrator forced a dedicated teacher to abandon her successful efforts with a 12-year-old Puerto Rican child. The official accepted the child's test score rather than the teacher's faith in the little girl's abilities, as the final word.

Many educators have been experimenting for years to demonstrate that there is nothing inalterably fixed about I.Q. scores. The handicaps of children from foreign or socio-economically sub-standard origins appear obvious. A number of experimenters thought that even ordinary middle-class Americans can readily improve their scores.

In 1960, after eight months of exercises with comprehension of words and analysis of concepts, the I.Q.s of a class of freshmen were raised by an average of 10·5 points, with the largest individual gain a phenomenal 32 points.

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whose early promise fades later on. There is undoubtedly too little provision for later correction of erroneous allocation, and if administratively possible it would certainly be advantageous to have not just one water-shed examination, but rather to have an extended period of re-allocation lasting over several years. But given the need for a decision at a certain time, intelligence tests are more accurate than they are often given credit for, certainly as far as the great majority of the children are concerned. In isolated cases, however, changes in IQ of up to 30 points, either up or down, have been reported. Hard cases make bad laws, but their existence should certainly not be forgotten.

It is possible to improve the forecasting efficiency of mental tests, but in spite of some very promising studies along this line no research of this type seems to have been carried out in this country. This is another aspect of the general restrictionist outlook; testing is done on the cheap, and the requisite research is very much neglected. The tests used to-day are traditional, and do *not* embody recent advances in academic research and thinking. This, indeed, would be my own main criticism. Testing is based on theories which are almost certainly outdated and in need of change. Thus English tests hark back to Spearman's theories of the 1920s which emphasised one central unitary type of mental ability, measured to varying extent by different types of test. American work has stressed the existence of several semi-separate abilities—verbal, numerical, perceptual, etc.—which should be measured in addition to the IQ which is little more than a kind of average. Our method favours children all of whose abilities are somewhat above average, although perhaps not so very much; it penalises the child with one outstandingly high ability, perhaps in the verbal or numerical field, but with only average scores in other fields.

This outlook may be particularly disadvantageous with respect to an aspect of intelligence which has been very much stressed recently in American research—"creativeness," or originality, or independence of thinking. All our tests are of the *convergent* type—there is only one right answer, and all the relations in the test items converge on this one answer. If asked to continue the series: 2...4...8...16...? the candidate has little choice but to put in the answer: 32. But consider now a divergent type of test, *i.e.*, one in which there is an infinitude of answers, and your score is the number and quality of answers presented. "How many uses of a brick can you think of in five minutes?" This is a typical divergent test item, and there is now much evidence that people who have high scores on tests of this type are not necessarily identical with those who score high on tests of the more orthodox convergent type. When we compare children who do well on traditional tests, but poorly on originality tests, with children for whom the opposite is true, then we find that they do equally well at school. However, the former are better liked by their teachers (originality can be an awful nuisance!); they also go for more conventional careers, have less sense of humour, and are generally less creative. Our present methods of selection favour the orthodox, non-original, non-creative child. Is there not something to be said for altering this balance in the 11+ selection, and perhaps also later on at the university? Scientific methods of selection must be constantly kept up to date, and a considerably greater investment in research is required if we want to avoid falling behind.

Opposing theories of mental organisation may not seem very important to most people, but it will be seen that the correct answer is vital to the problem of possible loss of quality with increasing expansion. If we only look at the IQ, then we must say that only 2 per cent of the population have scores as high as 130; if we want to have twice as many students at university, then we must lower the IQ requirement to something like 125. Thus there is a very definite limit to expansion. But if we think of a rather larger number of semi-independent abilities, whose average is only loosely represented by an IQ, then clearly there need be no question of any lowering of standards; the problem will rather be that of steering each prospective student into that field most closely geared to his pattern of abilities, interests, and past attainments. It is in this type of advisory capacity that I see the greatest contribution of mental tests, rather than in the simple role of angel-with-flaming-sword guarding the Garden of Eden from interlopers. And this role may with advantage be extended from university to school; few parents or teachers can really give advice on choice of subject with any basis in the actual abilities of the children concerned; yet this pattern of abilities will ultimately determine success or failure....

One last point. In his extensive investigations into educational selection in this country, Furneaux has pointed out that the view that we are living through a rapidly accelerating educational revolution is erroneous. The social-class distribution of school-attainment has changed very little since 1953. He believes that an increase in absolute numbers of working-class children, resulting from the effects of the "bulge," has been mistaken for a change in

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proportion. He blames lack of educational motivation and other handicaps associated with a working-class environment for this failure, and estimates that even on a simple IQ basis there is still a considerable amount of ability going to waste. Our real problem in the future, when the present restrictionist tendencies have been overcome, may very well be that of making higher education more attractive, and persuading able and gifted working-class children (and their parents!) that investment in education is worthwhile. Mental tests may be of considerable value here, in providing objective evidence of likely success or failure, evidence on which future action on the part of the individual may be more confidently based. Mental tests are therefore likely to be with us for a long time to come; but their scope, aim, and nature are likely to change considerably as the "educational revolution" becomes a reality.

H. J. Eysenck

New York's Unmelted Pot

By D. W. Brogan

SOMEWHERE in this most remarkable book[1] is an account of the once famous play by Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot*. It is made plain not only how bad, how irrelevantly romantic the play was, but we are asked to consider the important fact that shortly after writing *The Melting Pot*, Zangwill became an ardent Zionist and Zionism denies the basic premise of *The Melting Pot* that the United States is on the way (with the rest of the world following suit) to a happy state when "there shall be neither Jew nor Gentile." That day has not come and, if it is possibly coming, it will be a long time before it comes, as this study of "ethnic" groups in New York is meant to demonstrate. Indeed, the authors seem to imply that what will come is three different types of American, oriented around ancestral religions, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, all very American and internally homogeneous but not groups only faintly distinguished one from the other. Where the Negroes, overwhelmingly Protestant as they are, will be in this set-up, the authors wisely refuse to prophesy.

The merits of this book are so great that it is candid to begin by stating a methodological doubt. What we are given here is a picture of ethnic groups in New York and, by an implied extrapolation, what is true of New York is assumed to be true of the whole country. There are several reasons for doubting this. In the first place there is the *size* of New York, an importance difference on which the authors lay stress. New York is twice as big as the next biggest American city (Chicago) and its ethnic blocs are bigger than the ethnic blocs in other cities even if they are relatively smaller. Thus New York has more Negroes than any other city even if they represent a smaller share of the population than they do in, say, Washington, D.C., a city ignored by Messrs. Glazer and Moynihan. This statistical fact (possibly to be coupled with the unusual geographical setting of New York, after all Manhattan *is* an island) makes it risky to equate New York with Chicago and still more with St. Louis, San Francisco, Detroit. With everything said in this book, well, with nearly everything, I am in agreement, but I have doubts about seeing in New York a microcosm of the nation.

First of all, there is no real equivalent in any other city to the great Puerto Rican colony. The Puerto Ricans are now spreading outside "El Barrio," but the great mass is still in New York and the fantastically high net reproduction rate has provided New York with an ethnic group unparalleled in any other city. Soon there will be a million people whose home tongue is Spanish, who are American citizens by birth, who have their home country close at hand, a short (and cheap) plane ride away. It is not at all certain that the New York school authorities would not be well advised to begin the teaching of literacy in Spanish in many of the public schools of the city. So the Puerto Ricans are a case in themselves, a case admirably studied here.

THEN NEW YORK IS the home of the greatest Jewish urban centre in history. Other cities (say, Philadelphia) may have as many Jews in proportion, but they do not give the impression of being Jewish as Manhattan does. There are no Philadelphia equivalents of *The New York Times*, Macy's (or Gimbels), *The Evening Post*, Lehman Brothers, City College—but the list could be prolonged beyond the reader's patience. The Italian colony is perhaps not proportionately

[1] *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City.* By NATHAN GLAZER and DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN. (The M.I.T. and Harvard University Press, $5.95).

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bigger than the Italian colony in Boston, but it seems to have survived better. The Boston North End has suffered more from "improvement" than have the traditional Italian quarters of New York and the Italians have, I think, done better in New York city politics than the Italians have in Boston politics.

Then there are the Negroes. "Bronzeville" in Chicago may be more organised, more coherent, better integrated with the governing machine, but Harlem is still the Zion of the aspiring Negro and it is in New York that some of the most intractable forms of "the colour question" show themselves most obviously.

And the Irish, the oldest of the groups, for long politically the most potent, with the best balanced distribution of wealth, children of a city that *was*, in many ways, Irish long before there were more than a handful of Jews, Italians and Negroes on Manhattan and long before Puerto Rico was even a name? They are not, *pace* Mr. Moynihan, a representative sample of the Irish and still less of the American Catholics. For good and ill, they are New Yorkers, old New Yorkers, not Bostonians or Chicagoans and still less San Franciscans or St. Louisians. (I have freely coined some ugly adjectives.)

Because these groups are so large, they can create and maintain their own ethos, refuse to melt, and put up barriers in front of those members of the group trying to escape or to be merged in an undifferentiated "American" mass, that is, in a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (W.A.S.P.) American mass. They probably couldn't become "Wasps" if they tried, but their communities, notably the Jews and Italians, have been very successful in keeping the exits closed or difficult of access.

New York, then, consists of these groups plus, of course, the numerically small but economically and socially very powerful White Protestants, plus groups less important or less vocal than they used to be, such as the Germans. (It is worth noting that two of the immigrant groups that are helping to increase Catholic numbers nationally, Poles and "Canadiens," are poorly represented in New York.)

WHAT HAS NEW YORK made of them and what have they made of New York? As I have suggested, it is probably the Jews who have made the most visible mark and that from a slow start, for it is not the small and distinguished Sephardic congregations that have existed from the seventeenth century, or even the much more numerous German Jews of the mid-nineteenth century that have made New York "Jewish"; it is the mass immigration from the Polish Pale and from Russia. And the success story here is the rise in three generations from the sweat shops and push-carts of lower Manhattan to the smart Jewish districts, the smart Jewish suburbs, the "Borscht" circuit in the Catskills, the immense increase in the number of professional men and women who are both the pride and despair of their parents and grandparents. (Mr. Glazer notes the decline in importance of the Jewish doctor and the rise in community status of the scientist. He does not quote, however, the story current in New York, that the Jewish mother doesn't any longer cry out, "Captain, Captain, my son, the doctor, has fallen overboard," but "Captain, Captain, my son the atomic physicist has fallen overboard.") Despite doubts that I have known distinguished Jews express, the Jewish passion for learning, or if not for learning, for high professional accomplishment, does not seem to have been eroded by the New York experience. And it is their great superiority over the other "ethnics" that they have this passion for academic achievement, lacking in all the other groups. And the Jews are the wealthiest group in New York (apart, of course, from the "Wasps"). But all is not well.

First of all, Jews still suffer from certain social and business disabilities. They are victims of social and business anti-Semitism. They can't (on the whole) be members of the "best" clubs —where so much business is done. They are not welcome in the very best suburbs even if they are very famous. They find entrance to the great corporations, the great law firms, the great banks difficult or worse. They suffer much the same disabilities as Irish Catholics do in Boston but *not* in New York. (It was for this reason that Mr. Joseph Kennedy moved his family, for a time, from a Boston suburb to a New York suburb.) Moreover, being a Jew is so ambiguous a thing. It does not mean being religiously committed to the God of Abraham. New York, or at any rate Manhattan, does not much encourage religion. It is different in the suburbs and Jews tend of their own will, as well as from *force majeure*, to congregate together and, in the suburbs, the synagogue or temple may play much the role a "good" Protestant church does in a Gentile suburb. It will be a means of social identification if not of religious edification. But being a Jew is a matter of origin and a matter of environment. Possibly the older, better educated, more opulent New York Jews would have separated themselves from the newcomers as, it is suggested in this book, the middle-class Negroes do from the Negro masses, but for the impact of Hitler. The triumph of the emergence from the Ghetto was seen as transitory. As a writer in *The New Republic* put it thirty odd years ago, it was like being in a zoo looking calmly at a tiger in a cage and suddenly realising

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that the bars were down. Then Jews began to ponder the truth of Harold Laski's law, "Anybody is a Jew that the Gentiles think is a Jew." So Jews are people who give to Jewish causes, who display often exaggerated touchiness about affronts or injustices, who are anxious to get Judaism (whatever it may mean) given the same respectful attention as is given automatically to various forms of Christianity. So they may fight for the most rigorous exclusion of *any* religious symbolism in schools since it won't, in any event, be Jewish symbolism. (The success of Jewish department stores in celebrating both Christmas and Chanukah with the same window dressing suggests that the Jewish leaders are too pessimistic.) They are loyally "liberal," far more loyal to the Democratic party than the Irish now are. But, unfortunately for the mass of New York Jews, the community, if it can be described as that, has to live down the fact that while few Jews were Communists, many Communists were Jews. The only mass "fellow-travelling" movement in recent American history was the Henry Wallace "Progressive ticket" in 1948 and most of the mass was provided by New York Jews. And that is one of the causes of the Irish *v.* Jewish feuds that have so weakened the Democratic Party in New York.

Many of the genuine grievances of Jews a generation ago are no longer important. The "Ivy League" colleges no longer impose an open or covert "*numerus clausus*." Medical school doors are now open. The New York Jewish community is less and less proletarian. No doubt there still are "Jews without money," to quote from Mike Gold, but there are far fewer of them. No doubt there are relics of the old Ghetto life of the Pale like the "Rebbes" in Brooklyn who carry on the old traditions and occasionally descend on London to be welcomed by London Jews of a type not frequently met in Hampstead. But the New York Jew is well inside the American fence if he, partly by choice and partly by necessity, crops his own corner of the pasture.

THE UNEASINESS OF THE New York Irish has other roots. It is partly the uneasiness caused by the loss of control of what was one of the big Irish businesses, politics. The causes and results of that loss are admirably described, and it is a sad fact that the New York Irish have not produced a serious politician since Al Smith. True, they are well represented in the Reform section of the Democratic Party along with many more numerous Jews and "Wasps," but the reformers tend to come from Harvard, not from the Fulton Fish Market or even a Catholic college. They are Kennedy types, not the natural heirs of even the creditable Irish leaders of the past. There hasn't been a successful Irish boss in Manhattan since the death of Commissioner Murphy whom Mr. Moynihan calls alternately "Mr." Murphy or "Frank Murphy." (His name was Charles Francis. Did anybody ever call him Frank?)

But the Irish unease is not merely due to the decline of Irish politicians, boxers, entertainers. It is due to an alienation from the contemporary world. Here Mr. Moynihan pulls no punches. He fully justifies Dr. Johnson's dictum: "The Irish are a fair people. They never speak well of one another." So Mr. Moynihan points out that many Irish failures are due to the booze. Jews and Italians don't produce alcoholics or even heavy drinkers. The Irish do. I seem to see a hint that the Irish male takes to the bottle as a substitute for sex to which he is traditionally indifferent. Maybe; but the Scots, who don't come far behind their cousins in their fondness for whisky, are certainly not indifferent to sex. But whatever the cause, Irish alcoholism, like Negro improvidence, is a handicap from which rival groups, Jews and Italians, profit.

But it is bad education rather than the bottle that Mr. Moynihan blames for the stagnation of the New York Irish. Education becomes more and more important, more and more expensive. The policy of the American bishops is to build up, at vast expense, from the kindergarten to the graduate school, a Catholic system of education. The results may be morally magnificent; at any rate they represent an immense and creditable effort, but all the academic tests that can be applied suggest that, at college level, the Catholic student is not getting the teaching or the equipment he needs. This is not surprising when we find Cardinal Cushing of Boston boasting that not a single cardinal, archbishop, or bishop is the son of a college graduate. When we consider the number of Catholic college graduates, the number of wealthy Catholics, this is a significant admission—or boast.

Mr. Moynihan suggests that many Catholics would like to give up the struggle to keep the school system going and concentrate on the Catholic colleges. I think this is very doubtful. For the increasingly prosperous Catholic middle class and the quite large wealthy class send their children to "good," that is non-Catholic, colleges. Even people like Mr. William Buckley of *The National Review* didn't go to Fordham or to Georgetown, but took the risks of Yale. The Catholic who has had a purely Catholic education is as handicapped as a graduate of Yeshiva University. He finds dialogue with his non-Catholic countrymen, in what is an overwhelmingly secular society, very difficult. The clergy, beginning with prelates like Cardinal Spellman, find it impossible. American Catholicism, as

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seen from the outside, is a society in which the equivalent of Father Martin D'Arcy, S.J., is Bishop Fulton Sheen. To give the names is to state the problem.

But—and it is an important but—Mr. Moynihan writes as if the Catholic Church in America was purely Irish in its upper echelons and that the image cast by Cardinal Spellman of New York (or Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles) is the only image. But in the Middle West (and in parts of the South as in Texas, near the L.B.J. ranch), it is German. The only cardinal to be a national figure since the death of Cardinal Gibbons was Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago. In the Vatican Council there are stories of a division between Cardinals Spellman and McIntyre and Cardinal Ritter (of St. Louis) and Cardinal Meyer (of Chicago). Mr. Moynihan should go and live in St. Louis for a time or read Mr. Powers of Minnesota (and *The New Yorker*)!

ONE LAST VALID POINT is made by Mr. Moynihan that will be resented by many "liberals." The wide-spread support that Irish-American Catholics gave to Senator Joe McCarthy did not do any credit to their heads and not much to their hearts. But the Irish were having their revenge. They had been attacked for not being uncritical supporters of a Spanish Republic that tolerated the wholesale murder of priests and nuns. They were accused of being unduly suspicious of that great ally, Stalin, who had murdered the Poles at Katyn Woods. (He had also murdered Ehrlich and Alter, as a good many old-fashioned Jewish Socialists in New York remembered.) True, no American "liberal" magazine except possibly *The Nation* descended to the depths of imbecility (if that is what it was) of *The New Statesman*. But the Irish would have been more than human if they had not rubbed in the point that a very high proportion of Communist agents and sympathisers were Jews or "Wasps." It was not Fordham (the Jesuit University in the Bronx) which produced the real or alleged traitors of the McCarthy era. The Federal employees turned away from the Fort Monmouth installation were overwhelmingly Jews. And it is one of the revenges that the New York Irish and other Irish-Americans find gratifying that Harvard graduates are investigated by Fordham graduates since a large part of the F.B.I. staff come from that rapidly growing institution. Compared with Boston, the New York Catholic community is very open, but even so you can find complaints among the Irish of the ghetto mentality of the clergy. But we must not despair. The American Jesuits, including those at Fordham, are much more enlightened and much more learned than they were a generation ago. And Cardinal Spellman is not immortal, one is glad to think. If he were succeeded by someone like Bishop Wright of Pittsburgh, the whole character of the New York archdiocese would change, and even the diocese of Brooklyn could be carried screaming some way into the world of John XXIII and Paul VI.

THE SITUATION OF THE Italians is discussed with a great deal of sagacity and sympathy. Again, we must differentiate between the small and distinguished Italian colony from northern and central Italy, whose most notable member in the history of New York was Lorenzo da Ponte, and the great mass of Neapolitans and Sicilians. It is the Neapolitans and Sicilians who provide the votes, the labour force, the new Italian middle class, and of course the gangsters. The old and small north Italian colony is not very sympathetic to its southern countrymen—but it is not very sympathetic in Italy either. On a lesser scale, something of the same division can be seen in Glasgow between the small group of *Lucchesi* and the Neapolitans. But the New York Italians (like the Italians everywhere in the United States) have greatly changed and improved their position in the last generation. Most of them are now native-born Americans, although a number of their political leaders were in fact born in Italy or in Sicily. Then a phenomenon which I have noted but have not been able to explain until I read this book: the American Italians have returned to the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church in overwhelming numbers. When I first went to America 40 years ago I was told, and I believed, that there were more Italian ministers than Italian priests in the United States. This is no longer true, and whatever chances there were of the Italians becoming Protestant have now been lost, for a reason which Mr. Glazer hints at, but does not state dogmatically enough. The American Protestant finds it hard to welcome "lesser breeds without the law"; the Church does not. And in New York (and still more in very Italianate cities like New Haven), becoming a good Catholic, as most Italian Americans were not a generation ago, is one way to Americanisation. For an Italian girl to marry an Irish boy is an even more effective way to Americanisation, and it is a quite common form of mixed marriage. There are still no great Italian business figures in New York like Mr. Giannini of California, but the whole character of the community is changing. As among the Jews, Italian family feeling is very strong, even excessively strong. It is only recently that the Italian population of New York has begun to realise that it has any duties outside its family loyalties. There is therefore nothing of the pro-

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liferation of charitable and other philanthropic societies which marks the Jewish and the Irish Catholic communities. If the New York Italians want to boast of their *italianità* they put up a statute to Verazzano and get a new bridge called after him. They do not start a boys' club or a home for orphans. Mr. Glazer makes a great deal of the fact that there are comparatively few Italian priests and, like Mr. Moynihan, he tends to over-estimate the Irishness of the Church in New York. His explanation of the scarcity of vocations among the Italians is ingenious but implausible. He thinks it is due to the fact that Italians find controlling sex extremely difficult and therefore find celibacy impossible, whereas many Irishmen find sex impossible—or so it is said. But the old criterion of Catholicity, the willingness to provide priests, is not necessarily valid any longer. For example, no one can doubt that West Germany is far more Catholic in any realistic sense than is France, but it produces fewer priests. And rich Irish-American Catholic families do not often produce priests for the secular clergy, although they do produce priests for the religious orders.

I suggest that the scarcity of Italian priests reflects the low economic, intellectual and social status of priests in southern Italy and may change as the Italians begin to appreciate the high social and financial status of a priest in the United States. But the Italians are on the way, as the Irish and then the Jews were before them. From providing mayors, they will soon go on to providing senators, bankers, and bishops.

BUT WHAT OF THE GROUP which causes most perplexity and has had its problems made world-wide by *West Side Story*—the Puerto Ricans? Ten years ago I was living in Manhattan on the edge of the Puerto Rican district and I read both the Spanish daily papers, of which *El Diario* catered specially for the immigrants from Puerto Rico. At that time, I thought they were bound to remain at the bottom of the totem pole. They suffered from illiteracy in English and, indeed from near illiteracy in Spanish. They suffered from poor physique and bad health as well as from the absence of easily marketable skills. I thought they would replace the Negroes as "Low Man on the Totem Pole." I was wrong. For one thing, their health is much better in Puerto Rico than it was, thanks to the enlightened government of Señor Marín. Then a great many of the tropical diseases they suffered from in Puerto Rico do not thrive in New York. They are beginning to vote and their votes are beginning to be treasured and used. They are developing very rapidly a small business class, showing a great deal of commercial initiative and talent. Their interests in New York are watched over by the vigilant commonwealth government of Puerto Rico and although they suffer from low wages, horrible housing, and a family structure not adjusted to Manhattan—above all, not adjusted to the freedom given to girls in Manhattan—they are on the way up, still behind the Italians, but not staying at the bottom, as I thought they would.

Alas, the people staying at the bottom are the Negroes. The account of the Negroes given here is intelligent and courageous. It involves, in passing, some caustic comment on the effects of public housing and the failure to create real communities in the vast subsidised skyscrapers. "Urban renewal" may do much less than nothing for the poor of Manhattan, however profitable it is to the Jewish *entrepreneur* who does very well out of it. We all know from reading Mr. James Baldwin and Mr. Alan Lomax and, indeed, a host of others, how many genuine grievances the Negroes have—above all, the grievance of their disability, colour. It is, for example, one of the assets of the Puerto Ricans that the great majority are classified as white. This classification baffles geneticists and sociologists, for a century ago nearly half the Puerto Ricans were classified as Negroes! But Puerto Ricans know very well the advantages of being classified as white, and this has given them a lift which Americans Negroes cannot get except for the very few who "pass" into the white world.

But the novelty of this book is not in its repetition of the handicaps and hardships from which the New York Negro suffers. It is its bold suggestion that some of these handicaps and hardships are the fault of the Negroes. When everything has been done in the way of explanation, the *damnosa hereditas* of slavery, the brutality of the police, the badness of the schools, the fact remains that some of the Negro troubles are Negro-made. For example, as has been said often, the badly handicapped Puerto Ricans have developed their own middle class, mainly composed of small shopkeepers. In this area, Negroes have not only not gone forward, they have gone backward. They have also gone backward relatively in the professions. Although there are far better facilities for training Negro doctors than there were a generation ago, there are hardly any more Negro doctors now than there were then. The Negro in Harlem is almost always an employee of some kind or another. The Negro middle class is professional, and the profession is often that of being a government official, local or federal. The leadership of the Harlem Negroes is still in the hands of Negro ministers (although by an unfortunate

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misprint this truth is reversed). No one can pretend that the Reverend Representative Adam Clayton Powell is a satisfactory spokesman for the "race" to which it is asserted that he has in the past denied that he belongs. Yet to criticise Congressman Powell is to betray racial bigotry.

Mr. Glazer is not censorious: he can understand the resentment of the Negroes when reformers cracked down on the Borough President of Manhattan, the Honourable Hulan Jack, for a piece of quite minor graft. Why had the rules been tightened up just as Negroes began to get good city jobs? They have, in fact, been tightened up for everybody: no one can now make a fortune in New York politics, as Croker did, but one can see the grounds for the Negroes' irritation.

Yet it is possible to think that not all New York Negro grievances are the fault of the white world. It may be the result of slavery that the illegitimacy rate is so large, but it is a social fact about the New York Negro community which depresses its level, socially and economically. The fact that the Negro man (one hesitates to say husband) does not admit his responsibilities to his family, as all other groups in New York do, is a regrettable fact about Negro society. The Negroes have a theoretical passion for education, but it compares very badly with the genuine Jewish passion and its results. If there are hardly any Negroes in the Bronx High School for Science, this is not entirely the result of racial bigotry.

It may be, as Mr. James Baldwin tells us, that the sex life, the emotional life, of the New York Negroes is far superior to that of their white brothers. But if the New York Negroes want what the whites have, a high economic status, they will have to imitate the whites in various unattractive ways.

This is an old story. When the Gaelic League was trying to revivify Ireland after the fall of Parnell, it preached not only "the Language" but all sorts of social salvation such as cleanliness, industry, and pride. It preached, in fact, English habits. One of its mottoes was, "For as we are shall Banba (Ireland) be." And an Irish Jesuit has recently been preaching to his Catholic countrymen the desirability of their attempting to imitate some of the good habits of their Protestant countrymen. Mr. Glazer believes that everything that the law can do to promote racial equality in New York has been done, and in addition to the law there are a great many whites whose consciences are touched, especially among Jews. But the anti-Semitism which marks so many New York Negroes, although it is often justified by their encounters with Jewish shopkeepers and Jewish landlords, has a less attractive side: why are there no Negro shopkeepers or Negro landlords? It is not a matter of "race"—there have been many successful business tribes in West Africa. What Negro enterprise there is comes, Mr. Glazer tells us, from the West Indians, above all the Jamaicans.

Bernard Shaw pointed out a long time ago that one of the greatest handicaps of oppressed peoples was that they always had an excuse for their own faults—the brutal Saxon or the even more brutal American white. Both the brutal Saxon and the American white have a great deal to repent of, but one of the big signs of progress in Ireland is the willingness to believe that Irish troubles to-day are the result of Irish faults and not of English faults; and perhaps the New York Negro might be better off if he could admit that some of his troubles are self-made.

I HAVE SAID earlier that I do not think New York is a representative sample of the American ethnic system. I think the melting pot does melt much more outside New York than it does inside the city. Class and religious barriers are much harder to retain in a small town than in the vast megalopolis of New York. To grow up in a small, unaccepted religion on the wrong side of the tracks in Abilene is not as great a handicap, as General Eisenhower and Dr. Eisenhower show, as to grow up on the wrong side of the tracks in Manhattan. Yet the authors of this book note that in Manhattan there is a much easier mixture of groups and races than anywhere else in the United States. There are more white and Negro affairs and marriages, and so less contempt or, indeed, comment than in any other part of the United States. One of the few charms Manhattan has for me is its nearly complete freedom from one of the most annoying of American habits: impertinent curiosity about other people's affairs.

Perhaps we ought to have a number of other studies—of Chicago and San Francisco, for example—before we make up our minds whether the melting pot is doing its job or not. Meantime, here is a book of great interest and great intelligence. It is full of the most fascinating information, such as the fact that the Jewish leaders of one of the big unions employ Sephardic Jews speaking archaic 15th-century Spanish to deal with the new Puerto Rican workers' unions. In fact, I have learned a great deal and I think other British readers will learn a great deal about New York—above all about Manhattan. What they will learn is, on the whole, encouraging. For we can no longer make the innocent assumption that only America has race problems, or that Labour politics or Communism automatically abolish race prejudice.

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"A Long, Bitter, Sweet Madness"

An Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre

SARTRE: There are contradictions of chronology in *Les Mots*, and critics were right to emphasise them. They come from the fact that the greater part of the book was written in 1954, then re-handled and modified ten years later in the months that preceded its publication. I did not co-ordinate the dates.

—When you say "For ten years I have been a man awakening from a long, bitter, sweet madness," it is really from 1954 that this change must be dated?

SARTRE: Yes. At that time, as a result of political events, I was deeply preoccupied by my relations with the Communist Party. Thrown into the atmosphere of action, I suddenly understood the kind of neurosis that dominated all my previous work. I had not been able to recognise it before: I was inside. Simone de Beauvoir had guessed these reasons before I did. The characteristic of every neurosis is to represent itself as natural. I considered calmly that I was born to write. I needed to justify my existence, and I had made an absolute of literature. It took me thirty years to get rid of this state of mind. When my relations with the Communist Party gave me the necessary perspective I decided to write my autobiography. I wanted to show how a man can pass from literature held sacred to action which nevertheless remains that of an intellectual.

In *Les Mots* I explain the origin of my madness, of my neurosis. This analysis may help the young who dream of writing. This desire is rather strange all the same and is not without a certain "cracked" quality. The lad who dreams of being a boxing champion or an admiral chooses reality. If the writer chooses the imaginary, he confuses the two.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S *first autobiographical volume—see "Words" in last month's* ENCOUNTER*—has puzzled many of his readers and has provoked controversy among the critics. Sartre tried to clarify some of the points at issue in an important interview with* Le Monde, *the full text of which (translated by Anthony Hartley) we publish here.*

—One would say after reading you that you seem to regret having been forced to choose literature.

SARTRE: The fact is that in 1954 I was very near regretting it. I was a neophyte in another world. I had dreamed my life for nearly fifty years (I am about to be fifty-nine). But, you see, there are two tones in *Les Mots*: the echo of this condemnation and a mitigation of that severity. If I did not publish this autobiography sooner and in its most radical form, it is because I considered it exaggerated. There is no cause to drag some luckless being in the mud because he writes. Besides, I had realised in the meantime that action too has its difficulties, and that one can also be led to it by neurosis. We are not saved by politics any more than by literature.

—What are we saved by?

SARTRE: By nothing. There is no salvation anywhere. The idea of salvation implies the idea of an absolute. For forty years I was conscripted by the absolute, the neurosis. The absolute is gone. There remain countless tasks among which literature is in no way privileged. It is in this sense that "I no longer know what to do with my life" must be understood. Critics have been mistaken about the meaning of this phrase, seeing in it a cry of despair as in Simone de Beauvoir's "I have been cheated." When she uses this word it is to indicate that she claims from life an absolute which she cannot find there. We have the same point of view. I am no more in despair than she is. Moreover, I have always been an optimist, perhaps even too much so....

—The first Sartrean universe, that of La Nausée, *was scarcely rose-coloured. Have you stopped seeing the world in this light?*

SARTRE: No, the universe remains dark. We are animals struck by catastrophe.... But I discovered suddenly that alienation, exploitation of man by man, under-nourishment, relegated to the background metaphysical evil which is a luxury. Hunger is an evil: period. A Soviet citizen, an official writer, once said to me: "The day when Communism (that is, well-being for everyone) reigns, man's tragedy will begin: his finitude." It is not yet time to reveal it. I

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believe, I desire, that social and economic ills may be remedied. With a little luck that epoch may arrive. I am on the side of those who think that things will go better when the world has changed.

—So you reject the condemned universe of a Beckett?

SARTRE: I admire Beckett, but I am totally against him. He seeks no improvement. My pessimism has never been flabby. From the period when I wrote *La Nausée* I wanted to create a morality. My evolution consists in my no longer dreaming of doing so. To-day I consider *Les Nourritures Terrestres* as a frightening book: "Look for God in no other place than everywhere." Go and tell that to a workman, an engineer! Gide can say it to me: it is a writer's morality only addressed to a few privileged people. For that reason it no longer interests me. First all men must be able to become men by the improvement of their conditions of existence, so that a universal morality can be created. If I begin by saying to them: "Thou shalt not lie," there is no longer any possibility of political action. What matters first is the liberation of man.

—Does all this lead you to renounce your previous work?

SARTRE: Not at all. What I wrote about this in *Les Mots* has been misunderstood. There is no book of mine that I reject. That does not mean that I find them good. What I regretted in *La Nausée* was not to have put myself completely into the thing. I remained outside my hero's disease, protected by my neurosis which, through writing, gave me happiness.... I have always been happy. Even if I had been more honest with regard to myself at that moment I should still have written *La Nausée*. What I lacked was a sense of reality. I have changed since. I have slowly learned to experience reality. I have seen children dying of hunger. Over against a dying child *La Nausée* cannot act as a counterweight.

—What work would act as a counterweight?

SARTRE: That is exactly the writer's problem. What does literature stand for in a hungry world? Like morality, literature needs to be universal. So that the writer must put himself on the side of the majority, of the two billion starving, if he wishes to be able to speak to all and be read by all. Failing that, he is at the service of a privileged class and, like it, an exploiter. To find this total public he has two ways: the momentary renunciation of literature in order to educate the people which has been accepted by Soviet writers. In a country lacking leaders, in Africa, for instance, how could a native educated in Europe refuse to become a professor, even at the price of his literary vocation? If he preferred to write novels in Europe, his attitude would appear to me verging on treason. Despite an apparent contradiction there is no difference between service to an entire community and the requirements of literature.

The second way, applicable in our non-revolutionary societies, to prepare for the time when everyone will read, is to pose problems in the most radical and intransigent manner. This is what Alain Badiou has just done in *Almagestes*, where he puts language on trial with an intention of cleansing, of catharsis.

—An Almagestes *readable by all?*

SARTRE: Be careful. I am not recommending "popular" literature which aims at the lowest. The public, too, has to make an effort in order to understand the writer who, though he renounce complacent obscurity, cannot always express his new-hidden thoughts lucidly and according to accepted models. Take Mallarmé. I hold him to be the greatest of French poets, and I have taken some time to understand him! His theory of the hermetic is a mistake, but he can only be difficult to read when he has difficult things to say. Besides one should not believe that the people only want reading that is easy to absorb. The recent experiences of pocket-books prove this. I have changed my public since my works have been published in a smaller format. Now I receive letters from workers, from secretaries.... They are the most interesting ones.

—In short, the meeting between writer and public which you wish to be as extensive as possible so that literature may at last find its authenticity, is a victory on both sides....

SARTRE: It is a battle that has to be fought. As long as the writer cannot write for the two billion men who are hungry, he will be oppressed by a feeling of *malaise*.

—Do you want him then to place his pen at the service of the oppressed?

SARTRE: Yes, but this is the writer's task, and, if he fulfils it as he should, he acquires no merit from it. Heroism is not to be won at the point of a pen.

What I ask of him is not to ignore the reality and the fundamental problems that exist. The world's hunger, the atomic threat, the alienation of man, I am astonished that they do not colour all our literature. Do you think I can read Robbe-Grillet in an underdeveloped country? He does not feel himself maimed. I think him a good writer, but he speaks to the comfortable bourgeoisie. I should wish him to realise that

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Guinea exists. In Guinea I could read Kafka. I re-discover in him my own discomfort. *Almagestes* too, since through language it is our world that is put on trial. You see, the contemporary writer must write through his intimations of unease, while trying to elucidate them. He could be a kind of Beckett who would not be felt to be totally committed to despair. And the form matters little to me, classical or not. That of *War and Peace* or of *Almagestes*. All are satisfactory. The only criterion of a work is its validity: that it should grip and that it should last.

—Are you going to continue your autobiography?

SARTRE: Certainly, but not immediately. At the moment I am finishing a biography of Flaubert.

—Why Flaubert?

SARTRE: Because he is the opposite of what I am. One needs to rub up against argument. I wrote in *Les Mots* that "I have often thought against myself." That sentence has not been understood either. Critics have seen in it a confession of masochism. But that is how one *should* think: revolting against everything "inculcated" that one may have within oneself.

—Then: malaise, trial, disputation, revolt, authenticity, liberation.... You have not changed so much.

SARTRE: I have changed as everyone changes: within a permanency.

Letter from Yugoslavia

By Anatole Shub

IT IS, perhaps, too early to say that the Yugoslav Communists are entering their most serious moral crisis since the Djilas affair started a decade ago. They have had many ups and downs since then—in their relations with Moscow and Washington, in their economic development, in the evolution of their social institutions; and even the recent admissions of strikes and work stoppages represent nothing essentially new. There have been strikes before, and the Yugoslav Communists, unlike most of their Eastern cousins, have nearly always treated them as signals to raise wages or reorganise management rather than to call out the security troops.

More serious than this winter's strikes has been the recent series of statements indicating that Yugoslavia's own peculiar "North-South" conflict is far from resolved, despite manful efforts by the Communists these eighteen years to develop the backward South without injuring Northern pride or productivity. The Croats and Slovenes have been inveighing against "Belgrade centralism" as in the old days, and the respected, normally cautious Croat leader, Dr. Vladimir Bakaric, has actually compared "some people" with the late King Alexander. (A Serb, Slobodan Penezic, has for his part attacked "some people" who give such statements to the press.)

Communist rule has considerably transformed the terms of this old problem—it seems less ethnic and religious these days, more economic and political. But the current quarrels must be depressing indeed to Marshal Tito, who once said that his supreme wish was for the backward peoples of Macedonia, Montenegro, and the Albanian borderland to feel themselves "as fully Yugoslav" as the burghers of Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Rijeka, and Split. It was widely rumoured that the Marshal walked out twice on the factious mid-March plenum of the Central Committee, and had to be cajoled back by pleading subordinates (*"Stari, stari!"*). It seems more generally agreed that Tito's concluding speech at the plenum reflected considerable confusion, and that nearly all the disputed problems—principally, the shape of the Seven Year Plan for 1964-70—have been passed on, without any clear directives, to the Party Congress scheduled for November of this year.

That Congress—the Eighth, and first since 1958—promises not merely to re-echo the various arguments and complaints heard thus far; it will also be, in effect, the "succession Congress." It may not be the last one which Tito will attend, but it seems quite likely to be the last he can reasonably be expected to dominate. General-Secretary since 1937, Marshal of Yugoslavia since 1943, head of state since 1945,

ANATOLE SHUB, *a young American writer, has been living and travelling in Eastern Europe since 1962 as a fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs and correspondent for the* Washington Post.

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Tito will be seventy-two in May and he has begun to show his age. Defiantly, he still undertakes gruelling journeys abroad, but on his return from Russia in December, 1962, he looked exhausted and on returning from the United States in October, 1963, he was visibly ill; after the recent plenum it was announced that he had retired to Brioni on doctor's orders.

TITO WAS, IN HIS PRIME, the most direct and plain-spoken of the Yugoslav leaders, a model of concreteness compared especially with his somewhat high-flown ideologists Kardelj and Vlahovic. But his speeches the last year or so have begun to take on a rambling style, passing from one generality to another without much indication that he has quite grasped the intricacy of the problems besetting his aides. He can still rise to an occasion, especially in foreign affairs, which interest him more. His handling of Khrushchev last fall was a triumph of Croatian one-upmanship, down to quipping with newsmen in English and German before his monolingual guest had a chance to say a word. Yet in the domestic arena, the image Tito presents more and more is not so much that of a determined leader as of a rather fatigued mediator between contending factions and interests.

It is universally supposed that Aleksandar ("Marko") Rankovic will succeed him, but just as widely recognised that it will not be without a struggle. "Brioni-ologists" (the local equivalents of Kremlinologists) note that last summer, for several weeks after Rankovic's election as Vice-President under the new Constitution, his name preceded that of Kardelj in the newspapers. After a youth meeting in Sutjeska at which the crowd was induced to shout "Tito-Marko, Tito-Marko!" Kardelj reassumed his former (presumably alphabetical) precedence. The assumption among the evil-minded is that Rankovic may have "pushed too far too early in the game"—and that the forces opposed to the rule of a Serb from Serbia, and the long-time head of the UDBA at that, remain strong enough to block the front-runner even if they have no agreed champion of their own. (Kardelj is irrevocably cast as the perfect Number Two, a kind of Yugoslav Debré.)

YET IT WOULD be misleading to consider that the Yugoslavs' problem consists merely in replacing the "irreplaceable man" at the top. The problem of succession involves, in fact, the transfer of power between generations —from the now ageing veterans of the Partisan War to that part of the population, now a majority, which has achieved maturity since the war. Holders of the 1941 Partisan medal (as William Griffith has suggested) have occupied a place in Yugoslavia comparable to that of the Grand Army of the Republic in the United States in the 1870s and 1880s. But now they are being challenged daily, in office, factory, and classroom, by young men in their twenties and thirties who are as a rule better educated, more technically proficient, more widely travelled, and less obsessed by the anguish besetting the "international workers' movement."

To Tito's credit, he has long recognised the need to begin the integration of the "younger cadres" in the power structure. The process has not been an easy one. The number of places has been considerably expanded (the federal parliament now has six houses); "rotation" and limited tenure of office have been accepted in principle; but not even liberal pension schemes have stopped the grumbling of old Partisans retired in their fifties while most of the top leadership, as old or older, remains in office.

More disturbing, however, than the discontent of the old is the outlook of the young, "raised under socialism" yet apparently unsold by the claims officially made in its behalf. To be sure, everyone takes for granted free medical care, old-age insurance, and the expropriation of capitalism from the big key industries. Everyone is also for *true* "workers' self-management," functioning workers' councils with a real control over the directors, where such councils do exist in fact as well as on paper. There is also a considerable degree of gratitude to the Party dictatorship for forcibly suppressing the chauvinistic hatreds which wrecked inter-war Yugoslavia and were responsible for more than a million deaths during the war.

Yet, by and large, when it comes to such Bolshevik shibboleths as "the leading role of the party" and "socialist relations in the countryside," the young seem to turn stone deaf. There are, especially in Belgrade, an appreciable number of "young dogmatists" who appear to be, or pretend to be, even less agreeable than their middle-aged equivalents. But for the most part the young are less likely than their elders to confuse the régime's idealised version of the present with the realities of Yugoslavia to-day. Among the young intellectuals especially, the conflict between the official vision of socialism ("liberating Man as producer," etc.) and everyday life is responsible for a decided tension—which, of late, has begun to express itself artistically, if not yet politically.

A Film

I BEGIN with a film, *Grad* (The City). It was written and directed by three young

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men from Belgrade, Dr. Marko Babac, Zivojin Pavlovic, and Kokan Rakonjac. After making the film as amateurs more than a year ago, they sold it to a Sarajevo company called Sutjeska Film in the hope of gaining general distribution. Suddenly—as a result of an intervention whose origin has never been made clear—the company refused to distribute the film. Apparently the three young men had some idea of showing the print in their possession to a select audience in Belgrade, perhaps in the hope of attracting new backing. Whether or not it actually was shown remains in dispute. In any case, the director of Sutjeska Film took the case to the District Public Prosecutor in Sarajevo, who applied in the District Court last July for an injunction to prevent the showing of the film and to destroy all copies.

The main thrust of the prosecutor's case was that the film showed the social development of Yugoslavia in a negative light. Representatives of the company and various "social-political and cultural workers" testified at the trial, although the three young men who made the film were not called. On August 13th, 1963, the court ruled against the showing of the film, but did not insist on destruction of the prints; they were to remain in custody of Sutjeska Film. Two of the authors, Pavlovic and Babac, thereupon appealed the case; on the grounds that they had not been called and that portions of the film had already been shown in Belgrade, they argued that the Sarajevo court was incompetent and that the case should have been tried in Belgrade.

The film itself consists of three stories. The first, "A Year of Love," begins with a dialogue between two young girls (18–20), one of whom is depressed and suicidal; the other tries to fortify her to accept fate, with little success. The second girl then goes to visit her lover, a young man in his early twenties, whom she finds sleeping. She wakes him and tries to make him remember that to-day is the first anniversary of their meeting, but he has forgotten. There is long love-play between them, which the young man terminates by saying that the girl wears him out. His boredom is clear; she leaves.

The second story, "Heart," concerns a young doctor and his various visitors: first a prostitute, then a rather homosexual young imbecile, and finally a middle-aged man with heart trouble who had been an aristocrat but now works for the Communists. In telling this, he has a heart attack; the ambulance that comes for him passes a young man who has been beaten up on Marx-Engels Square in Belgrade and who lies bloody on the pavement.

The third story, "The Ring," concerns an armless veteran who, unshaven and dirty, appears in a café (where he sits under pictures of the war, Ivo-Lola Ribar and Comrade Tito). At a nearby table, some young men are abusing a drunk woman; he defends her, but upon leaving the café, the young men beat him up under a railway crossing. He goes to another café, where nobody pays attention to his bloody, dirty, beaten state. At a nearby table two young women are discussing abortions. After a while the invalid leaves and under a streetlight hears some young people criticising a woman who has left her husband and two children for a truck-driver; it appears that it is his own wife, although he does not react. "Leave him in peace—he's also a person," says one of the young people as he walks past them into the fog.

This is obviously fairly strong stuff for a Communist country, although Polish films have gone nearly as far. Yet what is interesting is not that the film was banned but that, first, it was *made*, then *accepted* by the film company, then *defended* publicly—and not only by its authors. In the December issue of *Delo*, a Belgrade literary monthly, the banning of the film was openly attacked in a 36-page essay by Dejan Djurkovic, a young playwright and critic, who quite angrily berated not only the prosecutor and court but the pliability of the film company and all the others who went along with the "witch hunt" (a recent phrase of Tito's which Djurkovic applied here). So sharp was the attack that the Sarajevo prosecutor asked the Belgrade regional court to institute criminal libel proceedings against Djurkovic. That was in January, yet the Belgrade prosecutor declined to go along, and the Sarajevo man's only recourse was a civil suit in which precedent, by and large, had been against plaintiffs. Furthermore, at a recent "Festival of Short Films" in Belgrade, Djurkovic's most recent film, *19 Million*, received a prize.

A friend compares this apparently contradictory history to the manner in which Nikola Pasic and the old Radical Party used to govern Serbia a half-century ago; to all, even those with the most diametrically opposed views, Pasic would say, "You're right," and somehow muddle through by private compromise. That foxy tradition is by no means dead. In addition to the fate of Djurkovic, I should also mention what happened to Zivojin Pavlovic, author of the invalid sequence in *Grad*. At the time of the Sarajevo case, he was working on a picture for Avala Films of Belgrade, perhaps the country's most important producer; they quickly dropped him and his picture. Yet, a few months later, he was quietly approached by a studio in Ljubljana, which gave him a substantial advance to do a film for them. . . .

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A Novel

A FEW MONTHS after the *Grad* case, it was the turn of a novel, *Cangi* (the hero's name), by a young Zagreb author, Alojz Majetic. Excerpts had previously appeared in Zagreb and Belgrade literary magazines; the novel was published last fall in Novi Sad. Last December 17th, the Public Prosecutor there applied for an injunction banning the book because of pornographic scenes and—probably more important—"false characterisation of youth participating in work actions." The novel depicts the life of youth brigades working on highway construction, and in a manner completely contrary to the happy socialist myth. The youths' lives seem pointless, grubby, nihilistic. The opening scene of the book is a weird, rather comic orgy, but although the novel is not important literature, the intent is serious. One could best characterise it by saying that the novel attempts to be a Yugoslav *Studs Lonigan*, but ends on the level of, say, *The Blackboard Jungle*.

The Novi Sad prosecutor succeeded almost immediately in obtaining a temporary injunction against the book, but then the case became stalemated. The publishers, aided by various Croatian and Serbian critics and literary figures, demanded that the court hear expert testimony from prominent writers, educators, and ideologists. The court summarily denied this request at first, but the next morning changed its view and agreed it would hear the experts. The sessions were postponed (that was December 20th) and have never been resumed. A court fight has thus been avoided (or at least postponed). *Cangi*, like *Grad*, is out of circulation; to release it now, say friendly critics of the régime, would make it a best-seller.

IN BOTH CASES, one notes three interesting themes. First, the resentment of the filmmakers and publishers, as well as critics and editors allied with them, at "administrative" interference in culture. These people, many of them Party members, took seriously the Yugoslav system of "self-management," according to which cultural bodies were sovereign in their own domain; they resent interference in their affairs by public prosecutors and the like.

Second, there was an evident conflict of generations. Nearly everyone involved in the production of *Grad* and *Cangi* is between 25 and 40; the political figures who authorised or sponsored the two prosecutions are doubtless of the older generation. Third, there was also an element, at least in the *Grad* case, of nationalities conflict or, rather, conflict between "mountain" and "plains" people.

Ernst Halperin in his book *The Triumphant Heretic* has interpreted the triumph of the Partisans as largely a victory of the poor, backward mountaineers of Bosnia and Montenegro over the civilised bourgeoisie of Belgrade and Zagreb. There is a good deal of truth in that interpretation, but one must add that, as Yugoslav society has become more complex, the mountaineers have found it impossible to govern without the co-operation of "plains" elements—*i.e.*, of the old intelligentsia or its heirs. In Djorkovic's defence of *Grad*, one sensed an almost compulsive emphasis on the Moslem names of the Sarajevo Public Prosecutor and some of his associates: how dare *they* do this to *us*, was the underlying refrain. In both cases, the central press, especially the Belgrade *Politika*, showed itself quite sympathetic to the defendants.

In a speech on December 26th, Vice-President Rankovic felt compelled to justify his prosecutors, but in a rather mild manner.

> You have seen from the press that some time ago a law court in Sarajevo banned the showing of the film *Grad*, and that recently the Public Prosecutor in Novi Sad started action for the banning of the distribution of a novel (*Cangi*). Undeniably, such measures are not good, even though justified in the long run. But they would never have been applied had the Communists . . . in these producing and publishing houses discharged their work diligently and on time.
>
> Certain self-styled "fighters for the freedom of creativity" are trying to present these measures in a cheap and sensational way . . . as being a brutal onslaught by bureaucratism on the freedom of artistic creation. To the authors of those articles and the editorial offices which have given space for such profoundly inhuman attacks on the state organs . . . [one must say that] the organs which have undertaken these measures do not appraise the artistic value of these works . . . but only look to see whether certain things, such as sheer pornography, come into conflict with our positive legislation.
>
> Against gross excesses in that field, which clearly come into conflict with the morals of our society and with the socialist conscience of our workingmen, even such measures as these must be undertaken if all other means have been exhausted. . . .
>
> As regards the criticisms that creative freedom is being endangered, the League of Communists not only does not endanger that freedom, but directly aims at the freeing of Man in work and in creativity. . . .

THIS IS, I THINK, the authentic old Pasic style, especially since the same consultative conference at which Rankovic spoke in December, and a second one in February, began bringing forth criticisms of Yugoslav society more direct and political than those made obliquely in the film and novel. At the December conference, for

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example, the secretary of the Central Committee's Organisational-Political Secretariat, Krsto Bulajic, noted, *inter alia*:

> Frequently individual workers and others, who have been maltreated because of criticism, have to fight by themselves for their rights, while the League of Communists and the trade unions remain neutral.... They have to suffer a great deal, both materially and in time, and, worst of all, appropriate material and political sanctions are not taken with sufficient energy against those who have acted incorrectly....
>
> There are facts which prove also that some members of the League of Communists were involved in different aspects of crime and in other misuses. Embezzlement and crime are also to be found in socio-political organisations (*i.e.*, the Socialist Alliance and trade unions) and sometimes among lower officials in the communes. And what is extremely strange, when proceedings against them are instituted, interventions begin with the alleged purpose of saving the reputation and authority of the organisation of which they are members.... There are cases of sentenced Communists remaining Party members.
>
> There are frequent cases of bribery, corrupting people by presents, higher rewards, comfortable positions, flats, etc.—all with the intention of preventing people from criticism, of inducing them to renounce their own ideas and thus clear the way for different, incorrect decisions....

At the second conference, criticisms along the same lines were heard. Corruption was the theme, after all, struck by Tito in his famous Split speech two years ago. But there were also newer notes. For example, Boro Petkovski cited the protests of miners in Macedonia against a wage scale that had been imposed by the directors and "approved" at a workers' meeting at which less than half the workers had been present. Danilo Fogel raised an even more fundamental question: "Why is the efficiency of individual directors judged by the profits accumulated in funds, rather than by the workers' wages, earnings, and living standards?" And a 42-year-old Slovene named Stane Kavcic made the flat statement that "the influence of members on the policies and decisions of the leaders of the League of Communists is very slight; it is even less than in other social organisations...."

A Professor

ALL OF THIS was within the bosom of the Party, but it was reported, if only summarily, in the press—and one had a sense from these and similar episodes of a certain restlessness and even impatience within the Party ranks. The reasons for the restlessness are not difficult to adduce. Quite apart from the problems involved in the change of generations, and the pressure of the educated young "plains" people on the semi-literate old "mountaineers," the Yugoslav régime has become involved (or involved itself) in a number of apparently insoluble contradictions. A rapprochement with the Soviet Union is being squared with influence among the "non-aligned" and economic dependence on the West. A one-party dictatorship is being rationalised by theories and formal institutions promising "socialist democracy." The centralised party apparatus must exercise its control in a governmental and economic system formally based on federalism and "workers' self-management." High investment rates and low wages contrast with slogans of "freeing the workingman" and stimulating "the material interest of the direct producer." A nation still fundamentally backward in many respects continues its pretensions to world leadership, and attempts to elevate a brilliant nationalistic opportunism into an ideological system.

There has been much ingenuity over the years in getting around these contradictions, yet the strain occasionally begins to tell—and this seems to be one of those times. The country does not quite know where it is going in foreign policy, and discussion of the 1964–70 economic plan has been both bitter and inconclusive. As a result of these uncertainties, things have been said and done which point to the true, rather than mythical, state of affairs in the country. Both *Grad* and *Cangi* were in this category, and far more to the point was a remarkable essay which appeared in *Politika* in February and whose salient points were promptly picked up by the writers' weekly *Knjizevne Novine*. The essay was written by Professor Mihajlo Markovic, a semantic philosopher at Belgrade University, and it is largely a plea against the starvation of the social sciences, and of theoretical work generally, in Communist educational policy. The entire essay was interesting, but the peroration was absolutely daring:

> Our society pretends that it is developing in accord with scientific principles. On our flag are inscribed the most noble human aspirations of contemporary life. Our society is clearing paths which have been till now impassable. It is making experiments with millions of people, an experience unknown to history.
>
> And yet we do not always have a scientific plan for our experiments—for which we would not forgive even a laboratory assistant experimenting with mice.... We do not even possess sufficiently comprehensive and trustworthy knowledge about the following:
>
> —How individual classes in our society live, what their political views are, what their moral formations are like;
>
> —What the effective role of the working class is in our society;

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—What changes are taking place in the countryside;

—What the present relations are between the various nationalities in our country and what tendencies are being manifested;

—What the young generation, which was born under socialism, really looks like;

—What are the effects of various great changes taking place in our society—technical progress, social self-management, decentralisation, more intensive money—commodity relationships, etc.

About all these problems we have, it is true, various partial, hastily prepared and insufficiently reliable reports, papers, analyses, inquiries, statistics, and so forth. The great question is: to what extent have all these documents been the product of really scientific methods; . . . how many facts are to be found in all this and how much idealisation, apologetics, the desire to please those who have requested the documents and have preconceived notions on these matters?

In a nutshell, there is a great question as to how much *scientific truth* [Dr. Markovic's emphasis] is to be found in these texts. Probably, one can squeeze out of them some things which pertain to our reality. But do we *know* about our reality as objectively, comprehensively, and concretely as possible?

Without such knowledge, rational control of social processes, decisive mastery of the situation in the face of uncontrolled events, real liberation of individuals and society in general, is absolutely out of the question. Without this knowledge, politics are more or less a matter of brilliant and inspired improvisations, more or less a process of painful and expensive learning from mistakes.

Dr. Markovic's essay turned out to be the first in a long series of criticisms; a week after its publication, he himself was elected to the managing board of *Politika*, the only journalistic survivor of pre-war Yugoslavia and still the country's most interesting newspaper. By the time the month was over, Mr. Svetozar Vukmanovic ("Tempo"), the trade union boss, had admitted that the country's machines were only being used at 54 per cent of capacity; Mr. Boris Krajger, the Slovene who supervises the overall economy, had announced that the livestock herd was smaller than in 1960; Dr. Bakaric had given an astonishing interview to the Serbian paper *Nin* in which he admitted that people were always asking him, "What have you done for Croatia?" and that he was rather at a loss to reply.

One should note, in fairness to those who believe that Tito's domestic policy since 1955 has depended largely on his relations with Moscow, that the great wave of criticism in the Yugoslav press began in the first week of February. Was it "no accident" that it coincided with the great Chinese blast finally nominating Khrushchev as *the* leader of "modern revisionism"? It is surely a fact that the Yugoslavs held their ideological breath for more than a year after Tito's return from Moscow, wishing to say or do nothing that might compromise Khrushchev in his struggle with pro-Chinese or "dogmatist" elements in Russia and elsewhere. Perhaps it is true (as this school of thought argues) that once a Russo-Chinese rapprochement at last became impossible, the wraps were off for the Yugoslavs, who were free once more merrily to pursue their revisionist ways.

Yet to ascribe the more lively atmosphere in Belgrade, or the genuine perplexity of the Communist leaders, merely to such global intrigues is to pretend that there is no Yugoslavia, only an island called Brioni. It is to do a disservice to the young men who wrote and fought for *Grad* and *Cangi*, and all the others who sympathised with them and who constitute Yugoslav public opinion, a force far more real to-day than in the stunned days after the war or during the battle with the Cominform.

One of the grossest errors of the old cold war was to assume, with Stalin, that in Eastern Europe generally, Communism was the end of the historical process. Later, in the first years of de-Stalinisation, it was all too readily assumed that Communism could somehow reach equilibrium through some sort of "revisionism" (strictly speaking, "right deviation") of the Tito-Gomulka variety. Yet, quite apart from the current preoccupations of the ageing leaders, trained in the Comintern, the rising generation has its own ideas and concerns, and these are now being felt. Sooner than we think, "Marxism-Leninism" and "proletarian" dictatorship may be viewed as a troubled interlude in the long histories of Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Croatia, Serbia, and the rest. Sooner than Marshal Tito may like to think, the prisoner of Sremska Mitrovica, Milovan Djilas, may be a prophet with honour in his own country.

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Beckett's Purgatory

By P. N. Furbank

IT IS PERHAPS not quite useless to remind ourselves of some of Beckett's literary ancestors. Joyce obviously, especially the catechism chapter, with its minutely exhaustive charting of totally insignificant phenomena; but many other aspects of Joyce too. In the last pages of *How It Is*[1] Beckett even triumphantly risks a passage built up on "yeses," like Molly Bloom's monologue. Valéry's *Monsieur Teste*? More remotely. *Monsieur Teste* (*i.e. tête*, pure unapplied mind, like one of Beckett's amputated heroes) provides an earlier version of the *Godot* joke, *viz.* elaborate intellectual operations rigorously performed about *nothing*, in a total absence of content. The tradition of scholastic and goliardic buffoonery: you could almost mistake this passage from *The Discovery of a Most Exquisite Jewel* (1652) by Sir Thomas Urquhart (the translator of Rabelais) for the Beckett of the *Murphy* period.

> Thus for a while their eloquence was mute, and all they spoke, was but with the eye and hand; yet so perswasively, by vertue of the intermutual unlimitedness of their visotactil sensation, that each part and portion of the persons of either, was obvious to the sight and touch of the persons of both; the visuriency of either, by ushering the tacturiency of both, made the attractation of both cosequent to the inspection of either.

Finally Maeterlinck. It's an elusive resemblance, but it's there—those teasingly simple dialogues, often at cross-purposes, conducted against a timeless and "posthumous" decor. (*End-Game*, as staged at the Royal Court, was particularly Maeterlinckian in feeling.) Beckett explodes Maeterlinck, as he explodes so many other literary conventions. Maeterlinck's dialogue, with its non-sequiturs, is always hinting at something left unstated. Beckett's non-sequiturs are what they are: there is nothing behind them. Again, one of Maeterlinck's favourite conceptions is that of the intruder or intrusion, some interposition from an unspecified "other" world. *Waiting for Godot* resembles a Maeterlinck play in which the expected intruder never turns up.

One mustn't make too much of these literary parallels. They are merely the things (and there are plenty more) which made it possible for Beckett to find his own personal style. He found this style, once and for all, in the three central novels, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable* which, as Hugh Kenner tells us in his brilliant book about Beckett, were all written in the 1947–49 period (years spent by Beckett in almost total seclusion in his Paris flat). In *Murphy* and the early pages of *Watt* the Beckett hero is still located in the world and is depicted from outside by the methods (or rather a wildly funny parody of them) of the 19th-century novel. Then we see him, in the guise of Watt, undergo the experience which renders these methods impossible; we see, that is to say, the birth of the later Beckett. Watt is employed in Knott's house, and two piano-tuners come to the door; the father is blind and leans on his son's arm. Watt lets them in, and the son attends to the piano while the father, for some reason, simply stands in the middle of the room. They converse:

> The mice have returned, he said.
> The elder said nothing. Watt wondered if he had heard.
> Nine dampers remain, said the younger, and an equal number of hammers.
> Not corresponding, I hope, said the elder.
> In one case, said the younger.
> The elder had nothing to say to this either.
> The piano is doomed, in my opinion, said the younger.
> The piano-tuner also, said the elder.
> The pianist also, said the younger.

Afterwards, the scene goes on repeating itself in Watt's head.

> In a sense it resembled all the incidents of note proposed to Watt during his stay in Mr.

[1] John Calder, 30s.

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> Knott's house. . . . It resembled them in the vigour with which it developed a purely plastic content, and gradually lost, in the nice processes of its light, its sound, its impacts and its rhythm, all meaning, even the most literal. . . . What distressed Watt in the incident of the Galls father and son . . . was not so much that he did not know what had happened, for he did not care what had happened, as that nothing had happened, that a thing that was nothing had happened, with the utmost formal distinctness. . . .

The experience is final. For if existence is going to present itself in this form, then there can be nothing to say *about* it any more; and accordingly from now on Beckett's novels are not about anything, except the rights and wrongs of writing at all. The infinite regress involved here was discussed by Beckett, as Kenner points out, in three dialogues with Georges Duthuit published in *transition*. Say an artist bases his art on the impossibility of *expressing* subjects—will he not still be expressing the impossibility to express . . . ? All Beckett's later fiction is about this issue. What is the justification for writing when there is nothing to write about? He has a constant temptation to make up "stories" ("now I've told another little story"). But telling stories, he finds, is just like having memories; and as memories may only be stories (are they his memories, or did someone else tell him them?) stories can't be based on memories. So what can they be based on? Nothing, and one ought to stop telling them. The hero of *The Unnamable* makes a little experiment in story-telling, but it goes all wrong. There was a woman who loved and married a man, but he went to the wars and was killed. So she married again; but the first husband turns out not to have been killed after all. So she goes to the station to welcome his return, but he dies in the train from the emotion. And when she gets home she finds her second husband has hanged himself, with emotion, at the thought of losing her. ". . . there's a story for you, that was to teach me the nature of emotion, that's called emotion. . . ." He tries to fix his mind on it, but the only bit he can concentrate on is *who bolted the door while she was out of the house*?

The answer is not as simple as not writing. For the writer feels the obligation to express as much as he feels the impossibility of it, and indeed the one thing he feels to be unequivocally real in the world is the words that keep forming. Of course they may not be his words (the hero of *The Unnamable* argues that he is being persecuted; there are others trying to make him believe it is himself who is talking), but it seems simplest to assume that they are. And nothing will stop them coming out—though just possibly if one were to say the right thing it might give one the right to be done with speech. Till then, the flow is unstanchable. The writer is like Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*; once he begins, he can't stop.

Having once taken the decision that he can't express anything, the writer looks round for another activity, and finds it in setting the apparatus of thinking and reasoning in motion for its own sake, in a vacuum—for instance employing the technique of the syllogism on meaningless premises, or setting the mind useless tasks of permutation. There is a minor advantage in this scheme of writing, in that the writer can satisfy a passion for symmetry, undisturbed by the arbitrary irregularities of phenomenal reality. And in addition to this, however hard he tries, the writer still keeps finding himself telling "stories," so another part of his activity will be watching and correcting this propensity.

And it is here, of course, that we really encounter Beckett. The creativity in his later novels occurs in hastily stifled asides, all the more poignant for being stifled (for that is the condition of their existence). And however much self-discipline is imposed, the asides go on occurring. In no previous novel did Beckett shackle himself as he does in *How It Is*. The novel represents a return, ten years or so later (the French version was written in 1960), to the theme of the *Molloy-Malone-Unnamable* trilogy. He has now thrown away syntax, the prose coming out in sequences of disjointed phrases grouped only into paragraphs, and he has imposed on himself a system (as in some children's game or liturgical formulary) by which when certain phrases occur certain others must always follow. Moreover, the narrator tries to tell the whole story, beginning, middle and end, all at once, and keeps correcting himself ("something wrong there") as he goes along. Style and matter revolve like a series of cogs engaging. The asides have now hardly any room to move in—there are to be none of those long free loops you still get even in *The Unnamable*. As for the action, it takes place in some featureless nether region of darkness and mud. The hero, dragging a sack containing tins of food, is crawling over the mud towards a similar, but motionless and prone figure (Pim) who is also clutching a sack of tins. This is part one. In part two, the hero, whom we now call Bom, gets on top of Pim (much elaborate technical description) and begins to establish communication with him. He teaches him to sing when he digs his nails in his armpit, to talk when he jabs a tin-opener up his rump, and to stop talking when he thumps him on the skull. They exchange "stories," Pim's about a picnic with a girl, Bom's about his broken marriage. In part three

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Bom has lost Pim and is regretting him ("with someone to keep me company I would have been a different man more universal"). It is then revealed that there are an infinite number of similar figures moving steadily eastward in single file. At any moment, half of them can move, half cannot. The former crawl to the latter, to play Bom (torturer) to their Pim (victim) and then in turn are immobilised and have to wait for the next Bom to reach them (now in the Pim role). This is all worked out by mathematical calculations spreading over several pages. As Bom (now Pim) waits he imagines, to comfort himself, an ear, somewhere "in the light above," that would listen to the endless quaqua of mud-voices:

> ...if there were a light oakum of old words ill-heard ill-murmured that murmur those murmurs
>
> fallen in the mud from our mouths innumerable and ascending to where there is an ear a mind to understand a means of noting a care for us the wish to note the curiosity to understand an ear to hear even ill these scraps of other scraps of an antique rigmarole

Then a more radical thought occurs to him: it is all "stories," "all those calculations yes explanations yes the whole story from beginning to end yes completely false yes." No Pim, no Bom, no sacks, no memories, no procession, no heavenly ear,

> only me in any case yes alone yes in the mud yes the dark yes that holds yes the mud and the dark hold yes nothing to regret there no with my sack no I beg your pardon no no sack either no not even a sack with me no

It seems at least a solution, but then the positive "yeses" and "noes" he is giving himself give way to "no answer." He screams at himself, getting the answer "screams good." The book ends here, but the voice evidently goes on.

How It Is is nerve-wracking reading, a deliberate torture, like Bom's to Pim, robbing the reader of all that delicious liberty and dignity he usually enjoys in reading. On the other hand, I think it is a considerable work (not as rich as *The Unnamable*, but a fascinating pendant to it) and one not difficult to *re*-read, a work which, after stretches of intolerable barren permutations, becomes intensely dramatic and touching in its last pages, as layer after layer of "story" is stripped away. Let me quote one more short extract to show the astonishing eloquence Beckett can still create out of these disconnected fragments of language.

> me again always everywhere in the light age unknown seen from behind on my knees arse bare on the summit of a muck-heap clad in a sack bottom burst to let the head through holding in my mouth the horizontal staff of a vast banner on which I read
>
> in thy clemency now and then let the great damned sleep here something illegible in the folds then dream perhaps of the good time their naughtiness procured then what time the demons may rest ten seconds fifteen seconds

This remarkable passage (based on some medieval woodcut illustration, I imagine) reminds one of another influence on Beckett: Dante. Dante has always dominated Beckett's imagination. Pim and Bom in the dark on their muddy plain are obviously in some circle of hell or on some terrace of purgatory (Beckett slips in a Dante quotation, incidentally: "in the rectum a redhot spike that day we prayed no further...."). Crouched, hugging his sack of tins, as much as possible in the womb position, Bom is like Beckett's favourite Dante character Belacqua in the fourth book of the *Purgatorio*. Dante and Virgil come across Belacqua near the entrance to purgatory, sitting with his head between his knees under the shadow of a rock. Dante grins, knowing his habits of old, and asks him why he isn't climbing the mountain. Hardly bothering to lift his head Belacqua replies: "Brother, what avails it to ascend?"

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Whodunnit

Who Killed Kennedy? By THOMAS G. BUCHANAN. *Secker and Warburg*, 18s.

FOR THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY of Americans, the office of President has a numinous quality which is reflected upon all its occupants. The President is hedged by a kind of divinity which has long ceased to surround a king. Thus, for Americans, there is something sacrilegious in the murder of a President, which others cannot wholly understand, however much they may sympathise. It is a desecration of the Union's hallowed ground and for an American it is almost inconceivable that this could be anything except the work of a diseased and deranged personality. To think otherwise, one would have to assume that there are evil men who for their own ends would plot and conspire to violate the most sacred altars of the Republic, and, unless of course such men were Communists, this is something most Americans cannot bring themselves to accept.

Mr. Buchanan, himself an American, has now written a book which will outrage all such beliefs, or superstitions, and at the same time give profound offence to many who believe themselves to be friends of the United States. *Who Killed Kennedy?* is in many ways an unpleasant book. It is marred by that kind of sour malice, of innuendo and *Schadenfreude*, to which left-wing writers (Mr. Buchanan is a recent ex-Communist) are so often unfortunately prone; even the shade of Jefferson Davis does not escape a perfectly irrelevant sneer. It is also marred by errors of historical interpretation which make one doubt Mr. Buchanan's credentials as a commentator on the contemporary American scene. If he can be so wrong about the historical situation which led to the assassination of Lincoln, about which after all one knows a great deal, if still not everything, why should we trust his account of the forces which led to the assassination of Kennedy, about which as yet we know very little?

Nevertheless, it would be a pity if its faults denied Mr. Buchanan's book the attention it deserves. *Who Killed Kennedy?* asks a serious question which demands a serious answer; and if no better answers are given than those we have already received from Dallas, one might reasonably conclude, as Mr. Buchanan does, that the United States may be threatened by even greater disasters than the murder of a President.

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Garfield, and McKinley; it is as if Mr. Buchanan were examining the history of some well-ordered and apparently prosperous family whose past has dark secrets, some taint of blood, which one day will once again erupt into violence.

Mr. Buchanan has no difficulty in showing that the assassins of the three Presidents were in no ordinary, or medical, or legal sense mad; in the case of the two of them who were brought to trial, the courts held that they were responsible for their acts. He also shows that they all had definite political motives, however eccentric or mistaken; that John Wilkes Booth certainly was the centre of a widespread plot, even though we still do not quite understand all its ramifications; that Guiteau, who murdered Garfield, thought he was acting on behalf of a defeated political faction; that McKinley's assassin, Czolgosz, was an anarchist who believed he was acting in the interest both of his own cause and of the people of the United States: "I killed the President because he was the enemy of the good working people."

What Mr. Buchanan is trying to establish is that there is a pattern of Presidential assassination in the United States and that this pattern does not accord with the popular belief that the murder of a President is necessarily the irrational act of a lonely and isolated individual who is diseased or deranged in mind. He wishes to show this in particular because the case against Lee Harvey Oswald is precisely that he was such an individual, who acted for no known motive; the original charge that he was a Communist agent was hastily dropped, both because of its inherent improbability and because it would have been extremely difficult to reconcile it with the details of Oswald's extraordinarily tortuous and ambiguous career. And indeed nothing that is known about Oswald lends support to the theory that he was a totally isolated individual capable of a wholly irrational act; any more than anything that is known about Ruby lends support to the theory that he was a patriotic and emotional American capable of shooting Oswald in order to spare Mrs. Kennedy further suffering.

The second act of Mr. Buchanan's whodunnit consists of a detailed analysis of the circumstances of President Kennedy's murder, so far as these are known from official statements and press reports. This is the best part of his book; and it should be noted that his criticisms of the official theory of the murder coincide with those of others, who may be believed to be less prejudiced than Mr. Buchanan but have found the same difficulty in accepting the baffling improbabilities of the official version. That version is that Oswald and Oswald alone was responsible for the crime and that he shot the President from a room on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Repository on the corner of Houston Street in Dallas.

Unfortunately, Oswald once again does not conform to the character of the assassin required by the official theory. It requires that, within the space of 5½ seconds, using telescopic sights, he should have directed three accurate shots from a rifle which had to be reloaded after each shot, at a range of 100 yards at a target moving at a speed of ten miles an hour. Such a feat would challenge the skill of the greatest marksman in the world. But Oswald's record as a marine shows that he was a poor, at best a mediocre shot, and I agree with Mr. Buchanan that even the most intensive training and instruction (which would imply that he had accomplices) could not have transformed him into the superlative marksman who is held to have shot the President.

There is the further difficulty that the distinguished surgeons who operated on the President stated that the bullet which killed the President entered his throat from the front. The assassin on Houston Street, of course, shot the President from the back. The surgeons' statement was later retracted and we are asked to believe that they made a mistake in the excitement and confusion.

But indeed the series of official statements issued in support of the case against Oswald present such bewildering inconsistencies and contradictions that they defy even the most willing suspension of disbelief. As Mr. Buchanan says, the only constant factor in them was the repeated assertion that Oswald alone was guilty, and as facts appeared which seemed to make this improbable if not impossible, the official version, but not its underlying premise, was hurriedly altered to accommodate them. The official case is surrounded by such a cloud of improbabilities and coincidences (as of the second Carcano rifle which, before the murder, a gunsmith fitted with telescopic sights to the order of an Oswald who was not Lee Harvey Oswald) that it places an almost intolerable strain on one's credulity. Mr. Buchanan concludes his examination of the police case by leaving the verdict to the reader; but he leaves no doubt of his own conclusion that Oswald alone did not and could not possibly have assassinated the President.

This brings him to the third act of his drama. For if Oswald was not alone guilty, who else was implicated and how was the crime committed? In answering this question Mr. Buchanan is necessarily driven far into the realm of speculation, and most of his readers, unless they share his own prejudices, will be inclined to dismiss his conclusions as

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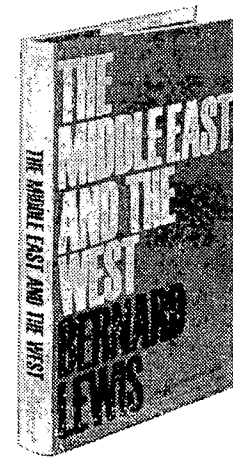

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at best *non proven* and at worst as the product of a fervent and malevolent imagination.

His account of the assassination involves the existence of two assassins, one of whom shot the President from the front from the railway tracks over the underpass which the President's car was approaching (it is significant that when the first shot was fired the onlookers instinctively thought that it had come from the direction of the underpass), while the other, with the assistance of Oswald, shot him from behind from the book repository on Houston Street. It involves the complicity of the Dallas police, who left the underpass unguarded and allowed Oswald to leave the book repository before, precisely one minute later, issuing an order for his arrest; and also of the unfortunate policeman Tippit, who was shot by Oswald after the assassination. It involves the existence of a widespread plot, in which Oswald was cast for the part of scapegoat and fall guy, and Tippit for that of his executioner, who would shoot him down, "while attempting to escape." (It is inexplicable that Tippit was alone in his radio car in the neighbourhood of Oswald's rooming-house, after a general call had been sent out for his arrest, though Oswald's address was known to the police.) But Oswald shot first, and by remaining alive became, for two days, an intolerable embarrassment to the conspirators until, with otherwise inexplicable negligence, the police created the opportunity for the professional gangster Ruby to shoot Oswald before the eyes of the astonished world.

But who were the instigators of the plot? Mr. Buchanan accuses the chiefs of the Texan oil industry, who through the "Dallas Citizens' Council" control Dallas and its police as effectively as any robber baron ever ruled a medieval community, and in particular one of them, Mr. X, a man of fabulous wealth and a colossal gambler who was willing to take all the immense risks involved in the conspiracy; Mr. Buchanan's description of him leaves little doubt whom precisely he has in mind.

But what were his motives and what had he to gain? His motives were political; to remove President Kennedy because, firstly, his policy of *détente* with the U.S.S.R. and consequently of disarmament was a threat to the Texas oil industry's huge investment in the industrial expansion which had taken place in Texas since the war, and, secondly, because he favoured a reduction in the 25% tax concession which makes oil the most privileged industry in the United States. Equally the motive was to replace Kennedy by Lyndon Johnson, a Southerner, a Texan, sympathetic to the oil industry and as a favourite of reactionary Texans less inclined than Kennedy to make the concessions which a *détente* with the U.S.S.R. would require.

STATED so briefly, Mr. Buchanan's charges have an air of fantasy; we are in the world of the Manchurian Candidate, only the cops and robbers have changed sides. But they also have a basis of reality. He supports them with an account of the known connection between politics, big business and organised crime in America, based on the findings of the Kefauver Senate Committee, and with an analysis of the structure and organisation of the Texas oil industry, and the psychology and political chauvinism of its masters, which does not differ in essentials (though with the note of admiration missing) from what one may read in such respectable writers as Mr. John Bainbridge or Miss Edna Ferber. Mr. X is Giant.

And indeed in this lies the sting and the venom of his book. Mr. Buchanan uses the murder of the President to hold up a mirror to America which reflects such a Caliban image of brutishness and corruption that her enemies can only view it with glee and her friends with dismay. It acquires force simply because the analysis of the President's murder is sufficiently searching and persuasive almost to convince one that this explanation of it must be true; at the very least one is inclined to say that it covers what appear to be known facts better than the official explanation. Mr. X is a more convincing figure than Oswald as a lone assassin or Ruby as a patriot.

What is worse is that the seeds which Mr. Buchanan has sown will find fertile ground to fall on, if not in America, in the rest of the world, where there are millions of men and women who are only too glad to think the worst of the United States, whether she is their friend or their enemy. It is fortunate, therefore, that, even if Mr. Buchanan were right in his account of the particular elements in American life which he has chosen to emphasise for the purposes of his book, there are also other elements in it which he chooses to ignore though in the long run they have invariably proved the stronger.

In the President's Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy, presided over by Mr. Earl Warren, ex-Governor of California and Chief Justice of the United States, America has an instrument which can either put an end to the suspicion and charges raised by Mr. Buchanan, and not by him alone, or ensure that the guilty are brought to justice. No-one who is familiar with the career or the reputation of Mr. Warren can have any doubt of his integrity or his courage or his devotion to the principles to which the United States is dedi-

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cated; equally, one cannot doubt that Mr. Robert Kennedy will use to their fullest extent his powers as the Cabinet minister responsible for the F.B.I. to ensure that the Commission will have all the technical assistance it requires in its investigation. (Though Mr. Buchanan, no doubt, would ask us to remember that it was only Texas which gave the Democratic Party its victory in the last Presidential election.)

It must be said, however, that unless the Commission examines in the closest detail Mr. Buchanan's criticisms of the official case against Lee Harvey Oswald, there will be many outside America who will fail to be convinced that it has discharged its task adequately. In his Preface Mr. Buchanan states that, at the request of a staff member, his book has been filed in Washington with the President's Commission. One may expect therefore that it will receive from the Commission the scrupulous and objective examination it deserves, and until the Commission has reported it would perhaps be an act of friendship to suspend the doubts which the question *Who Killed Kennedy?* must arouse in anyone who has seriously studied the case.

There is however one fascinating corollary to the hypothesis Mr. Buchanan has formed about the President's murder, and indeed it might be used as the principle of its verification. If Mr. Buchanan is, in general terms, correct, it should follow as the night the day that Ruby will never live to go to the electric chair. He has appealed against his sentence, and the processes of American law are protracted; in the meantime he constitutes precisely the same dangers to the conspirators, if there was a conspiracy, as Oswald did before Ruby shot him. One must hope that Ruby is given better protection than the Dallas police gave Oswald.

Goronwy Rees

Two Kenyans

So Rough a Wind. By Sir Michael Blundell. *Weidenfeld & Nicolson*, 40s.

Child of Two Worlds. By R. Mugo Gatheru. *Routledge & Kegan Paul*, 25s.

What impresses one about the authors of these two books, both of whom are Africans—one by birth and one by adoption—is the enormous range of experience which they have managed to accumulate through their willingness to move beyond the familiar world of their native cultures. Though in large measure they have both managed to conserve those native values which they consider important, they have also bravely come to terms with symbols and images of unfamiliar alien cultures in which they have been forced to move: when the time came to deal with a new greatly expanded world neither showed those withdrawal symptoms by which we are certainly entitled to separate the boys from the men.

Michael Blundell was eighteen when he arrived in Kenya to deal with the African bush and what seemed to him to be the inscrutable ways of a primitive superstitious people. He found the continent itself "vast, passive, and untamed by man's constant and sustained endeavour"; and yet by the end of the book he pronounces hopefully:

> I have confidence in the future of Kenya and of Africa. As I write this, we are planting tea on the farm outside my study window—tea, which will not give economic return for five years and which . . . will still be contributing to the economy of Kenya in fifty years' time.

When you consider the political turmoil which preceded the writing of this book, the destruction and the bitterness which was left in the wake of the Mau Mau upheavals, the charges and the counter-charges which befogged much of the constitutional development of Kenya during the 'fifties as black and white Kenyans wrestled for power, Sir Michael Blundell's olympian calm, his "sporting" acceptance in the end of African majority rule, is surely astonishing.

Not so long ago when I was in Nairobi it was the favourite pastime for the curious visitor to drop in at the New Stanley's "Long Bar," which was then the haunt of an embittered white settler minority and to listen to the din of voices raised in fervid prediction of the dire doom which must needs befall the country now that "the darkies are taking over." It would have been only too easy for Michael Blundell, in particular, to succumb to the same temptation, not the least reason being that throughout the last decade he had worked for a pattern of constitutional development slightly different from the one which was finally imposed upon the white settlers. Yet any reviewer must surely record that Michael Blundell has happily reserved his energies for better and more worthwhile occupations. What he and Mugo Gatheru, the Kikuyu author of the other book, finally make of each other will therefore make exciting future reading.

Not the least virtue of Gatheru's book, on the other hand, is the wealth of information that it yields a reader about that presumably dark, inscrutable world of African tribal life and

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custom about which, though Sir Michael Blundell repeatedly tries, he can quite understandably tell us very little. What so baffled many white people about the Kikuyu during the Mau Mau is here set down simply and honestly, without—surprisingly enough—that aggressive defensiveness which mars many an autobiography by Africans bent on creating an image for the outside world.

Gatheru makes no attempt, as is the wont of his counterparts elsewhere in Africa, to resurrect some mythical, supremely eminent African civilisation which his people might have originated or propagated; he is content merely to tell, with great affection and warmth, of the social life of his people, its poverty and its richness; he tells of black magic, the marriage rites of polygamy, the rituals of circumcision, and the practices of the medicine-man he was destined to be. But what seizes and captivates the mind and heart of the reader in his story is the faith, the resourcefulness, and the indomitable courage of a young Kikuyu who begs, scrounges, schemes, and borrows money in order to travel abroad in quest of a higher education.

Though Sir Michael thinks the real explanation for the outbreak of the Mau Mau was not so much the result of a tribe's hunger for land as a form of psychological retreat from the pressures of modern society by a primitive people, Mugo Gatheru—and there are many Kikuyu like him—makes it impossible to entertain this notion seriously. Certainly a better example of acculturation and adaptability would be difficult to find. Gatheru's thirst for knowledge, his enterprise and resourcefulness, are the exact opposite of a retreat from the pressures of technology. By the time he has reached Chicago, via India, and is initiated into the recondite ways of American courtship, it seems to the reader that this young man has spanned centuries between one civilisation and another; but in the end Mugo Gatheru seems to synthesise quite naturally whatever he has learned of the Western world into a richly varied personality, thus justifying the title of his book, *Child of Two Worlds*. Take this light passage from the book:

> "How well up are you in your kissing methods, just in case?" [A Chicago friend enquires of Gatheru just before his first critical encounter with the deadly American female.]
>
> "I think I can manage," I said.
>
> "I do not want you to make a mistake because I know that the Kikuyu are not used to kissing, since it is not one of their customs," Drake said.
>
> "I shall try to do what I used to see Europeans do in Nairobi."

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"When you hug a girl, and you must be sure that it is the proper moment and at the right time, you can then kiss her gently. There are different ways of kissing. For example, what is called the 'French way' is different from a friendly kiss. . . ."

This candour and utter lack of self-consciousness is what makes the book finally the pleasure that it is; and yet it is not improbable that Mugo Gatheru realised the underlying charm of some of the social gaucheries to which he so readily and joyfully confesses. Occasionally one can see him prankishly adjusting his tribal *ngithitu* for a gallery of fascinated European spectators ready to be "wowed" out of their seats by his exotic appearance and performance.

Both these writers love Kenya, their country, and are greatly affected by the land. If at first Sir Michael found the land of his adoption treacherous, he has come to terms with it and loves it no less than Mugo Gatheru claims he does. Yet Mugo Gatheru seems to have been suppler, more adroit in adapting himself to new situations than Michael Blundell, perhaps because he encountered the West not as a conqueror more eager to teach than to learn. On the whole it is Sir Michael rather than Mugo Gatheru who finds himself "a marginal man" in the new society. Throughout the book it is Sir Michael's search for balance between a genuine affection for Africans and revulsion at some of their ways, it is his attempt to mediate between what he considers "white settler interests" and the legitimate demands of the African people which creates the central agony of his political career up to the very time of his retirement. The inconsistency, as he tries to reconcile his two attitudes, is everywhere apparent in his book; one can see him literally buffeted by the "winds of change." In one breath he tells us Africans "lack imagination and find it difficult to plan and think ahead" and in another he is astounded by their vision; for people who were never in contact with machinery he finds their capacity to learn and adjust to new situations nothing less than miraculous: "They have a thirst for education and an amazing confidence in their ability to master technical processes."

Such inconsistencies are not wilful: as one reads further into Sir Michael's memoirs one begins to capture the peculiar emotional rhythms of a liberal white settler. When Africans are in a militant mood, when they demand nothing less than a "full loaf," Sir Michael is clearly irritated; he thinks them unreasonable and persuades himself into believing that they are unprepared for shouldering the responsibility of government, their extreme demands being sufficient proof of this lack of responsibility. On the other hand, since he is no die-hard "white supremacist" himself, when faced with a mob of white settlers sworn to keep Kenya a "white country" he is appalled; in fact, at such moments he swings in the opposite direction. He finds the Africans reasonable, demanding no less than is due to them; he scorns those white people who entertain the illusion that they can dominate a continent largely populated by black people. It is at this stage that one wonders: was not Sir Michael's quest for the middle road between these two opposing interests an impossible and doomed task from the beginning? Considering the exceeding scarcity of "moderate leaders" these days where was Sir Michael hoping to find his "moderate African" who would refuse a full loaf even if he were offered it?

This is not to say that Sir Michael's book is a document of confusion; in fact there are some wonderful insights in it. At a time when Southern Rhodesia seems to be the next colony to go up in flames the ultimate fascination of Sir Michael's memoirs, I suppose, is what they reveal about the intrigues, the machinations, and the rueful improvisations which pass for policy-making and planning in the Colonial Office. No doubt part of the accumulated wisdom of British diplomacy is to meet any new situation head on without a shred of policy in the hope that one will be obtained along the way. This has only one advantage; maximum flexibility for manœuvre. Nonetheless, from that part of the book dealing with Kenya's constitutional development the picture which finally emerges is the fascinating one of Senior Ministers lying flat on the floor somewhere in Westminster, with their ears close to the ground, praying for rain.

Much has been made of Sir Michael's references to Ian Macleod, but I think him a little unfair here. No doubt he found Macleod as cool, calculating, and as difficult to deal with as he relates; Macleod has recently published what is a reasonable argument in self-defence. Once a policy of disengagement had been decided upon it needed a decisive, unsentimental man to perform the difficult surgical operation. Such operations always seem a bit ruthless. Of course, Sir Michael Blundell might be forgiven if he and the white settlers didn't like the avuncular tone: "This hurts me more than it does you, Michael, my boy, but we've got to use the birch. . . ."

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locked in fierce combat. So what does he do? He hastily summons the combatants to No. 10 Downing Street in the dead of night. Sir Michael relates:

> We went late in the evening like conspirators to the gate of No. 10 Downing Street.... We set ourselves around the table with the Prime Minister in his chair under the portrait of Robert Walpole. He gave us an impressive, rather histrionic talk, pointing out the years of history, triumph, and disaster which the room had witnessed since Walpole initiated the Cabinet system.... The speech affected and influenced many of the members, but not those who held a minority view. They were unaffected by this appeal to history....

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Lewis Nkosi

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Edward the Seventh. By Sir Philip Magnus. *John Murray*, 50s.

> *The yacht turned hurriedly and made for home, and was well past the Bay of Biscay when, at three in the morning of May 7th, 1910, a second message arrived: "I am deeply grieved to inform you that my beloved father the King passed away peacefully at a quarter to twelve to-night (the 6th)* George."
>
> *The Prime Minister, sad and shaken, went up on deck and stood there, gazing at the sky. Upon the chill and vacant twilight blazed Halley's Comet—which, visiting the European heavens but once a century, had arrived with appalling promptness to blaze forth the death of a King.*
>
> Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England.*

The death of a king—and it is hard not to melodramatise it even further as the Death of an Age. The clichés in which we remember the Edwardian era tell their own story: "the long summer afternoon of Edwardian England... how distant seem those jerky newsreels—Czar Nicholas and his family taking the salute in St. Petersburg, King Edward and his nephew the Kaiser seen driving in state through the streets of Berlin... King Edward leading in his Derby winner Minoru to the frantic joy of stolid policemen, waving their helmets in the air, jockeys, peers, shopkeepers and touts, yelling 'Good Old Teddy! Teddy Boy! Hurrah!'... the days when England and all Europe were run from a handful of drawing-rooms, and there were, of course, twenty shillings in every pound...." But what were the real historical milestones of the Edwardian era. The Wright Brothers' flight? Marconi's first faint transatlantic flicker of morse? Old Age Pensions? The slaughter on the Odessa steps?

Edward's fascination, of course, lies in the fact that he was not so much the embodiment of his age as the supreme embodiment of just that part which gave it its glitter, its historical surface; of just that part which was to be so cruelly swept away in the holocaust that was to come. He was the centre of that whole, safe, comfortable intimate world that had its foundations in quicksand. He was a King when Kings still mattered. If he himself had little direct political power, he was still in the middle of the one family-tree that covered almost every throne in Europe—and it cannot be said that his relatives lacked power, or respected him any the less for his lack of it. He was the leader of the British landed aristocracy at just that moment in history when, in their huge (for the most part hideous) country houses, they had evolved the most comfortable and sumptuous mode of living ever seen—and they still had the illusion of political power.

Edward, in short, was the leading actor in a gigantic game of make-believe; it was his good fortune that he left the stage before the game turned into tragedy. His story, and the one Sir Philip Magnus has to tell, is how, against all parental odds and against a lifetime of constant frustration, he matured unerringly year by year to play his part so surprisingly well.

There was, first, the complete failure of the Prince Consort's rigorous attempt to turn his eldest son into a model of high-minded, high-principled Victorian respectability. "In his dislike of clever books and Professors," wrote Queen Victoria in despair, "Bertie is my caricature." Indeed early in life the Prince showed himself naturally lazy, pleasure-loving, and ungifted.

Secondly, the Queen hardly helped the situation by never taking any further steps to prepare her son for the throne, nor even by allowing him to take such jobs as he wanted. He was forbidden to join either of the services, on the grounds that he "belonged to the people" (the same grounds which dictated that he should be sent both to Oxford and to Cambridge, lest there be any hint of discrimination). So not only was he officially unemployed—even worse, his mother, throughout her life, refused to give him any initiation into state affairs; for thirty years he was reduced to pitiful dependence on his friendship with Cabinet Ministers for his right to see State Papers. This he took very hard—

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particularly since he knew that his brothers and sisters were frequently taken into the Queen's confidence more than he.

Thirdly, of course, were the massive dangers to which his social life exposed his reputation. Having early ignored his mother's recommendation to Lord Granville that "the Prince and Princess of Wales should not go out to dinners and parties during the London season" but that their social lives should be restricted to "occasional visits to the houses of two or three high-ranking Cabinet Ministers and to the very few privileged great houses," the young Prince plunged deeper into the social life of his subjects than any member of the Royal Family before or since. Both his gambling (with, as *Reynold's Newspaper* put it, "the gold that he obtained from the toil and sweat of the English working man") and his sexual adventures led him into intimate involvement with a series of scandals and divorce cases, culminating in the famous Tranby Croft case where even his anxiety to shield another man's guilt was turned against him by public and political opinion. As for his love affairs, Sir Philip Magnus observes magnificent discretion. The furthest he will go, apart from references to the Prince of Wales kissing a girl in Germany when he was fifteen (described by W. E. G. as "this little squalid debauch") and his "flirtation" with actress Nellie Clifden, is to say that "no public scandal was caused when the Prince of Wales became Mrs. Lantry's lover." For the next episode we are reduced to "For some years [Lady Brooke] filled the place in his life and affections which Mrs. Langtry had once held." And finally, in this declension of the arcane, in reference to the King's last "great and good friend" Mrs. Keppel—"King Edward showed an innate delicacy by never once mentioning in her presence the name of her predecessor Lady Warwick" (as Lady Brooke had now become). Just one reference to "actress friends" hints that the Prince's affairs were considerably more indiscriminate than Sir Philip likes to make plain, and accounts for at least part of the reputation for which Edward was constantly hounded by the respectable press. *The Times* said on his accession that the King had been "importuned by temptation in its most seductive forms" and that he must often have prayed "lead me not into temptation" with a "feeling akin to hopelessness."

But there was a reverse side to King Edward's public image as a gambler, lover, sportsman, and *bon viveur*. As George Dangerfield said: "when he came to the throne, his people saw in him something nameless, genial, and phallic, the living excuse for their own little sins . . . Englishmen had never cared for a respectable monarch." Undoubtedly Edward's reputation never did him great harm with the public at large—indeed the country was frequently convulsed with great waves of his popularity (*e.g.*, in 1871 when he nearly died of typhoid caught from Lady Londesborough's drains; or in 1900, when his horses won, among other races, the Grand National, the Two Thousand Guineas, the Derby, the Leger, and the Eclipse).

In embracing aristocratic "vices" Edward had also developed a very strong paternalistic sense of aristocratic obligation. No one was more eager to serve on Royal Commissions on the Aged Poor or the Housing of the Working Classes; despite the obstacles placed in his way, Edward longed to know what was going on in the political world, from which he drew so many friends. With most of his relatives scattered round the thrones of Europe, a good deal of his family affairs were intimately tied up with foreign politics—a family feud followed when Prussia, of which his brother-in-law was Crown Prince, seized Schleswig-Holstein from Alexandra's Denmark.

And so it was that, when he finally succeeded to the throne in 1901, Edward was not only not a disaster—but one of the most level-headed sovereigns in Europe, and even, on at least two occasions, able to bring considerably more in-

TAVISTOCK PUBLICATIONS

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R. D. Laing and D. G. Cooper

Foreword by Jean-Paul Sartre

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fluence to bear on events than customary royal prerogative would have allowed. The first—the part he played by his wildly successful visit to Paris in preparing the ground for the *Entente Cordiale*—has been often disputed. But there seems little doubt that, on the second, without his constant and loyal support, neither Haldane nor Fisher would so readily have been able to force through their reforms of the Army and Navy.

IF, AS AT LEAST one reviewer has claimed, King Edward the Seventh has had a "bad press" over the years, then Sir Philip Magnus' solid biography will do much to restore the balance. In view of the Royal Family's mass-destruction of private papers (what Sir Philip describes as a "lamentable combustion"), his amassing of over 1,200 quotations in the text alone amounts to a firm foundation for this new and kindly portrait.

But one has suspicions that in some cases this picture of the king who always took off his hat to servants off-duty is just a shade too flattering. Apart from Sir Philip's discretion as to Edward's sexual licence, which must be forgiven in what amounts to a semi-official biography, there is little or no mention of that boorishness among Edward and his friends that has found its way into less stately glimpses of "Tum Tum's" life. Sir Philip is tempted to look on Edward's castigation of British officers who referred to Indians as "niggers"—and his remark that "because a man has a black face and a different religion from our own there is no reason why he should be treated as a brute"—as evidence that racial prejudice was "anathema" to the Prince of Wales. And indeed the Prince was instrumental in getting his many Jewish friends accepted by society all over Europe. But only a few years after the Prince's visit to India, when the ridiculous King Kalakava of Hawaii was on a visit to London, and the Crown Prince of Prussia objected that he should be given precedence, Edward replied, "Either the brute is a king, or he's a common or garden nigger; and if the latter, what's he doing here?" Much of the King's "racial tolerance" was simply his social sense that everybody—including servants—should be treated well according to the station in life to which they had been called. When it was suggested in 1909 that an Indian should be appointed to the Viceregal Council, no one was more opposed to this disturbance of the natural order of things than the "racially tolerant" King. As for the Jews, the frequently indigent Prince was never one to deny that sufficient wealth could more than make up for deficiencies in birth.

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If there are minor flaws both at the heart and on the periphery of this book—it would have been nice to see from time to time a broader historical canvas as background to the detail—Sir Philip's main theme runs triumphantly through. Early in life, when Edward was undergoing the Consort Course in Kingship, it might have seemed that, like Hamlet:

His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own,
For he himself is subject to his birth:
He may not as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends,
The safety and health of this whole state....

But Edward did carve for himself.

Christopher Booker

Those Old Movies

A Million and One Nights. By TERRY RAMSAYE. *Frank Cass*, 75s.

IN 1914 there was an important meeting between the heads of the Famous Players movie company—Adolph Zukor, Daniel Frohman, and Edwin S. Porter, who ten years before had directed *The Great Train Robbery*. The problem that faced them was the loss currently being made by distributors, a loss due to the shortage of feature films and not their unpopularity. The only solution appeared to be an immediate switch to a production schedule of one feature film a week. "There's not enough picture talent in the world to make that many pictures in a year," was Porter's reaction, and he was right if he meant works of artistic quality.

This decisive meeting, described by the late Terry Ramsaye in his classic pioneer work of film history,[1] can be seen as the turning point in the development of the American film industry. As Samuel Goldwyn (at that time selling gloves in New York under the name of Goldfish) once remarked, looking back on the early days of the cinema: "We have passed a lot of water since then."

Before World War I the making of motion pictures had been a chaotic affair—the mere provision at first of occasional changes of programme for the technical novelty of the peepshow and, after the big breakthrough of 1896, the screen. Later, in the face of pessimistic opposition by businessmen, came more attention to content and eventually the feature film. At this time many of the leaders in the field devoted more attention to patent disputes than to picture-making, and the first important moves to California were made by the independent film producers, who were not only looking for the sun but anxious to escape the harassment of the Patent Company's strong-arm men.

But the decision taken with some reluctance in 1914 by Famous Players and their competitors was to create an industry out of this chaos. It led directly to everything that was Hollywood—everything, that is, which accompanied the assembly-line production of films: the star system, the studio style, the ruthless exploitation of talent, the attendant publicity and ballyhoo ("orig-*ca.* 1913—U.S."), the sensitivity to public opinion and pressure groups not merely in the United States but throughout the world.

Although Mr. Ramsaye's book has been superseded by more comprehensive, though less lively, histories, its very lack of perspective brings home to one the hectic activity of those early years (his book ends in 1925) and demonstrates how the foundation of every social, economic, and artistic aspect of the cinema was laid down then. What he, or anyone else, could not have foreseen was that in twenty-five years' time Hollywood would be in a steep decline and in thirty years moribund as an institution; that an even more voracious and less discriminating consumer of material would take over and draw the critical fire.

INTELLECTUAL ATTITUDES to Hollywood have always been ambivalent. The films have been enjoyed, though the majority disparaged and many despised; an occasional one—a *Citizen Kane* or an *Ox-bow Incident*—hailed as an exception and held up as an example of what movies could be like if it weren't for the industry. An interesting expression of the traditional contempt is found in *The Cocktail Party*, the vocational choice offered by implication to Celia Coplestone between being crucified on an ant-hill in Kinkanja or working on a treadmill in Hollywood. Hollywood here, I take it, is what Mr. Eliot might term the objective correlative of all our attitudes towards a degrading mass culture.

As the record of Hollywood was kept by writers, it is inevitable that the industry should come out extremely badly. The literature of Hollywood reads as bleakly as the reports from the angels visiting the cities of the plain. (Even Scott Fitzgerald—more sympathetic to the industry than say Nathanael West, Raymond Chandler, or Budd Schulberg—planned to have Monroe Stahr plot the murder of his rival.) There are at least three good reasons for this. Firstly, most writers brought out to the Coast were abominably treated. Secondly, playwrights and novelists have always tended to overrate their potential importance to the movies. And

[1] It was first published in 1926 in a limited edition (each copy signed by Thomas Edison) and a popular edition of which the new one is a reprint.

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thirdly, as Elia Kazan once pointed out (in a devastating article on the treatment of writers in Hollywood), "every last one of them seemed embarrassed to be there, and the embarrassment expressed itself in a bitter wit."

There is, of course, a fourth reason—that there is little derogatory that anyone *could* say about the movie industry that wasn't true, no depths of corruption he might describe that could not be supported by the facts. For instance, Ezra Goodman observes in his entertaining and well-documented *The Fifty Year Decline and Fall of Hollywood* (1961) of the late Harry Cohn, head of Columbia Pictures:

> Undoubtedly, Cohn was monstrous. But his evil was forthright and quite exhilarating in a community where hypocrites are as numerous as starlets and where some of the foremost glorified gangsters have set themselves up as Albert Schweitzers.

But now that the old Hollywood has gone there is a strong and largely spontaneous movement towards recognising the real value of so much that was produced over the years—especially of its potency and myth-making quality, the very things that once disturbed earnest sociologists. (There is, too, a certain sneaking nostalgia for the buoyant, confident atmosphere of Hollywood in its prime which seems at the remove of a decade or so to take on the disarming quality of a ghost town like Dawson City. The local contribution to this is the ritual of the Academy Award evening, an annual wake in which the participants ceremoniously act as if the corpse were still alive.)

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., for instance, has written about "When the Movies Really Counted" (*Show*, April, 1963)—a tribute to "the Golden Age of Hollywood" which suggests that the films of the 1930s are second only to FDR in claiming his attention and affection. In *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, Edward Albee immediately establishes his characters (and rapport between them and his audience) by having Martha imitate Bette Davis saying "What a dump!" and challenging George to identify which "goddam' Warner Brothers epic" the line comes from. Identifying the source of the line has been as much a topic of audience conversation during the first interval as more obviously rewarding ones. The Brattle Theatre at Harvard, I read, is almost exclusively devoted to the showing of Humphrey Bogart films to cater for the local Bogey cult. Finally, a great many people of my acquaintance claim—whether truthfully or not—that their only reason for possessing a TV set is that they want to see the vintage movies.

Ironically, this intellectual movement has been taking place at a time when foreign films have just started to get a wide distribution in the States, and when M.P.s have been protesting in the House, apparently on behalf of indignant constituents, about the showing of old Hollywood movies on television.

Of course a great deal of this is due to nostalgia—to the recognition of what a *New Yorker* "Talk of the Town" piece described as the gulf between "The TV Generation" and "The Movie Generation." This is the difference between those who go to Los Angeles to see Disneyland and those who go there to examine the concrete footprints outside Grauman's Chinese Theatre, between those who think of Kildare and Gillespie as Richard Chamberlain and Raymond Massey, and those who think of them as Lew Ayres and Lionel Barrymore (and wonder how the hell Abraham Lincoln ever got mixed up in medicine).

BUT THERE ARE other reasons. One of them, I believe, is a reaction against the increasingly complex and intellectualised international cinema of to-day—not a rejection of it but merely a feeling that one can't take something like *The Eclipse* or *Muriel* every week, let alone three times a week. But the main reason for the new vogue in the old standard product is the richness of texture that was a bi-product of the studio system. The richness lies not in the uniqueness but rather in the opposite quality—the minute variations on themes and on the established personalities of stars, the recurrent supporting performers, the careful working within strictly defined genres, the way in which films refer to each other. And perhaps most surprisingly of all, how within this system so many directors were still able to build an impressive body of personal work.

All but forgotten now is the failure of Hollywood to measure up to the challenge of the times, to produce those responses to reality for which contemporary critics pleaded in vain, to set free the artists to create those masterpieces which would redeem the medium or turn out those revolutionary works which Lenin had prophesied. What seemed great works of art at the time have faded much more than the routine products of Hollywood, neglected then but often invested with an attention and a personal commitment of however perverse a nature. They have not been dated because, for the most part, they were not in their essence a direct reflection of any time or place. Perhaps there is a valid symbol to be found in the M-G-M lion—he surmounts the ironic motto *"Ars Gratia Artis,"* snarls at the audience and then turns away, fading with a gentle smile.

Philip French

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EAST & WEST

Letter from a Russian Writer

"*The American Pangs of the Russian Conscience*"

WHEN THE CHARACTERS in Konstantin Simonov's play *The Fourth* have said all they have to say and the curtain falls for the last time, the theatre is filled with the sound of sos . . . sos . . . being tapped out in Morse. The signal is addressed to the *Soviet* audience or the *Soviet* reader, and it prompts the question: Whose souls are to be saved? Whose souls is Simonov concerned about?

An interesting topic of conversation! But, of course, the souls to be saved are *American*. The author says so unambiguously in the very first sentence of the work. To avoid any misunderstanding—which God forbid!—the "Voice of the Author," introducing the action, clearly states: "This happened to him (the hero of the drama) one evening, in a big town, *on the other continent*." Whereupon the play begins, and American names follow each other thick and fast: Jack Willer, Ben Crow, Charles Howard, Teddy Frank, etc. Moreover, this use of local colour is not limited to the names of the characters. Other American names, the American spy-flights, the Un-American Activities Committee—everything is brought into play to deceive. But to deceive whom exactly? The Soviet theatre-goer or reader? Or could it be the Soviet censors? Or perhaps both at the same time?

The question is worth studying. The problems raised by Simonov's play are too serious to admit of an ill-considered answer. Also they transcend purely literary issues and are of direct concern to readers, both Soviet and non-Soviet; and still more so to writers of all countries.

Konstantin Simonov is one of those writers whose degrading activities in the recent past have not altogether deprived them of what might be called a conscience. These surviving traces of conscience are enough to spoil his peace of mind. Although a writer such as N. Gribachov can proclaim freely and categorically that he is ignorant of the causes that may have prompted the suicide of Alexander Fadeyev, who directed the ideological purges in Stalin's day, Simonov cannot go so far. "I do not know," Gribachov flatly declares in *Literature and Life* (December 24th, 1961). Gribachov has no conscience left, but Simonov still retains enough to be unable to say: "I do not know." On the other hand, he cannot bring himself to say, "I know," because he is afraid. Afraid, no doubt, of what he knows. Or more precisely, of the consequences that would inevitably follow if he admitted to knowing. At any rate his conscience is uneasy, and the central theme of his drama *The Fourth*, in which all the characters are American, is the problem of conscience among Soviet intellectuals, which is one of the essential problems of our time. It is doubtful whether the broad mass of readers and theatre-goers realise this. The fact is that, in dealing with *The Fourth*, the newspapers and reviews have done everything possible to prevent such a realisation.

Vorovsky St.,[1] and perhaps Simonov himself, will say that this is sheer provocation and will accuse me of slander and anti-Soviet propaganda. But the vicious resentment of the people who may respond in this way is a matter of indifference to me, as are the tribulations of Konstantin Simonov. Nor do I care what pleasure American propagandists may derive from my article. What I am concerned about is the honour of Russian literature and of my people, and not the various passions of the politicians who tell lies professionally both on this continent and on the other. That is why I can write what I am writing with a clear conscience.

SINCE 1956, THE CONSCIENCES of our intellectuals have been gnawing at them because, in their heart of hearts, they know very well the part

[1] The Moscow address of the Writers' Union.

OUR *colleague, Maurice Nadeau, editor of* Les Lettres Nouvelles *in Paris, has received a long and remarkable letter from a writer in Moscow, and these are excerpts from the extensive Russian manuscript. A pseudonym has been used for obvious reasons. Readers will recall the general background of Soviet cultural politics as presented in our anthology "New Voices in Russian Writing"* (ENCOUNTER, *April, 1963*) *and in an* ENCOUNTER *pamphlet, "Khrushchev on Culture" (a full text with notes on Ehrenburg, Evtushenko, Sholokhov, et al.). "Seen in this context," as M. Nadeau writes, "Ivanov's letter will appear 'violent' or 'uncalled for' only to those who are genuinely naïve or who simulate naïveté. Its 'opportuneness' is not open to discussion; the only thing that can help writers and artists who are thirsting for truth is* TRUTH. *There is, in the U.S.S.R., a deeply-rooted desire for the truth, and Ivanov's virtue is that he contributes to the expression of this desire. . . ."*

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they played in the spiritual conception of the Soviet people. But as for saying all the things that would have to be said before they could look people frankly in the face again, they neither can, nor will, do that. Any excuse is a good one if it allows them to keep quiet about their past or to justify it in one way or another. They refuse to see the simple truth, which is that neither art, nor literature, nor the social sciences can develop without sound criticism of the past. In its absence, even ordinary human relationships cannot return to normal. One lie begets another, and we are still living under the rule of lies.

After the 20th Party Congress, the review *Kommunist* (No. 12, 1956) published an article by three signatories: A. Mechenko, A. Dementyev, and G. Lomidzé. In the course of analysing various literary questions, the authors wrote that before the 20th Congress, under the influence of the personality cult,

> in literary criticism as in the other social sciences, the view became prevalent that only J. Stalin was qualified to express new ideas having, in principle, a methodological value. The application of this view led to an ossification of creative thought, dogmatism, a mania for quotations, and the mechanical "adaptation" of facts and phenomena to one or other of Stalin's opinions. *In most cases this was done sincerely at the time, and with the profound conviction that true science lay in this direction.*

All this is correct, except the last sentence which I have put in italics.

The question of the sincerity of the Soviet intelligentsia at the time is a question of principle. If, in fact, scholars, writers, and artists sincerely believed in the genuineness of their ideas when they were producing the rubbish demanded of them, then they were just stupid and nothing more. But supposing they were not sincere? Supposing the achievements that won them Stalin prizes in cash, year after year, were not carried out with conviction? In this case, has the Soviet intelligentsia not fully deserved the name which is applied to certain ladies of public utility? Thanks to fantastic subsidies, it can draw a flattering veil not only over its sins but also over the intellectual syphilis it contracted through indulgence in political prostitution.

Before the 20th Congress, the question of the sincerity of the Soviet intelligentsia was raised for the first time in the review *Novy Mir* by Pomerantsev, in an article entitled "On Sincerity in Literature." It clearly implied that Soviet writers had long since stopped being sincere. The Central Committee of the Party fully understood Pomerantsev's implications. As a result, a real cannibal dance was performed around him. The cry was that the behaviour of a writer should not be judged by the criterion of sincerity but by that of Party spirit! And sincerity was dismissed as part of the paraphernalia of idealist obscurantism.

But it would seem that now people feel prickings of conscience and various articles, written in various tones, repeat the same refrain: "In most cases, it was done sincerely at the time, with the deepest conviction... etc." Those unacquainted with the atmosphere in which these "deep convictions" were formed may accept the evidence supplied by the authors quoted above. But as time passes, it quite frequently happens that our rulers say too much and give the game away. At a national information meeting devoted to the subject of ideological work and held after the 20th Party Congress, D. G. Sturua, secretary of the central committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, in speaking of Beria's literary successes, also recalled the case of Mguéladzé:

> There is [he said] another former secretary of the central committee, Mguéladzé, who was envious of Beria's laurels and who also wanted to be known as a Party "theoretician" and "historian." He summoned the members of the Marxist-Leninist Institute and of the Historical Institute of the Georgian Academy of Sciences and gave them the task of drawing up a history of the Communist Parties of Transcaucasia. The comrades set to work and eventually brought the text to Mguéladzé. After reading it through, he declared, literally: "For my part, as the author, I am very satisfied. But let me tell you that if it contains the slightest error, my very dear friends, you will all go to prison." (*The 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. and Questions of Ideological Work*, State Political Publications, Moscow, 1962, p. 177.)

To-day, just ask these "very dear friends who set to work and brought their text" what they thought on receiving *scientific* instructions of this kind! They will reply unhesitatingly: "We sincerely believed, with deep conviction, that true science lay in that direction." It is quite the thing, nowadays, to pretend to be stupid, even moronic; what can be expected of a stupid person and can he be blamed for what he is?

This new form of hypocrisy has become the fertile soil on which bloom the lush flowers of the new lie. That is why a neutral attitude towards the nonsense put about by our "brother-writers" must be stigmatised as a crime. And, above all, as a crime against the Soviet people. I refuse to take part in it and I should like to demonstrate to those of my fellow-citizens who read foreign reviews how far elementary cowardice can lead a Soviet writer.

Since the reader of this article may not be acquainted with the play by Simonov that I

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mentioned at the beginning, I must dwell on it a little.

[Here, Ivanov gives an analysis of Konstantin Simonov's play, *The Fourth*, which deals with the moral degradation and the pangs of conscience of the Soviet intelligentsia, under the guise of a rather far-fetched story about an American journalist. He then points out that the "reactionary" Soviet press was able to attack the play only on questions of form, since the real subject was concealed, while the "liberals," on the contrary, have praised Simonov for his "boldness."]

SINCE I WANT THE TRUTH to be known, it might seem that I ought to share the opinion of the liberals. I too ought to exclaim with delight: "A splendid fellow, that Simonov! He has killed two birds with one stone; he has denounced the American war-mongers and spoken boldly about our internal problems."

The liberals can go into raptures, if they like. What matters, in my view, is to know exactly what is to be thought about Simonov's play. Is it really, as they say it is, "bold" and "progressive"? Does it both serve the cause of peace and help towards a solution of our internal problems?

Before answering these questions, let us examine the sleight-of-hand used by Simonov, that is, the method he has adopted and that he himself (and not only he) calls the Socialist-Realist method.

[Ivanov explains how the hero of the play, when summoned before the Un-American Activities Committee, agrees to play the part of police-spy and informer in order to safeguard his liberty and his career. Through his fault, Ben Crow, one of his former comrades in the Spanish Civil War, is arrested and dies in prison.]

What, in fact, has Simonov done? He has taken one of the commonest phenomena of *Soviet* life (spying and informing) and disguised it artificially, as it were, through the use of an *American* character. (Who will ever know how many of those amongst us who fought in Spain in 1936 ended up in prison exactly like Ben Crow?) And since it was not so long ago that almost the whole of Russia was appearing before an Anti-Soviet Activities Committee, it is easy to understand why Simonov's boldness should have aroused enthusiasm among the liberals. One of the play's supporters said to me: "Just think! It's a direct reference to Elsberg!"

Professor Elsberg, a doctor of philology and a Stalin Prizewinner (second class), was one of our most shameless informers. He denounced dozens of people and, by spilling their blood, ensured a brilliant scientific career for himself and also became a member of the Union of Soviet Writers. It is true that the royal road he once followed has now come to a dead end; his record bobbed to the surface again recently and came in for some unwelcome publicity. The "professor" was excluded from the Writers' Union. But that does not prevent him being as sprightly as ever and actively working for his reinstatement, with a certain amount of support behind him. But how many other Elsbergs have not even suffered the unpleasantness he has experienced? There are thousands of them; their name is legion. They are accommodated in all sorts of industrial undertakings, administrative departments, and teaching establishments. They provided mass support for Beria. And Simonov has had no better idea than "boldly" to conceal under an American disguise one of the basest and most shameful aspects of Soviet reality....

The author of *The Fourth* follows this same method in all respects.

[One of the characters in the play is killed in Vietnam by a former SS man alongside whom he was fighting the Communists. But the hero writes in his paper that the character has been killed by the Vietnamese.]

It would be possible to quote hundreds of examples of the attitude adopted by Soviet writers and journalists when our own SS were killing our fellow-countrymen and then covering up their crimes with the most varied stories. I shall give only one.

When Sergei Kirov was assassinated, our newspapers at once declared that he had been killed by foreign spies; it was out of the question, then, that he could have been killed by his "own people." Soviet (not American) writers and journalists expanded this version until it reached gigantic proportions. An incredible amount was written on the subject, both in verse and in prose. However, on the eve of the war, the rumour spread in Moscow that Kirov had been killed on Stalin's orders.[2] But after the war Simonov wrote a poem entitled *Sacco and Vanzetti* in which he implied that the murderers of Sacco and Vanzetti had also killed Kirov. (Anti-American themes were beginning to be fashionable in our literature at the time.) And the poem ended with the lines:

We Communists have good memories
For everything that is done in the world.
And it is in vain that the murderer hopes
Not to have to answer for the past.
We are still in robust health
And in the mornings our children go to school
By way of Kirov St.,
Boïkov St.,
And Sacco and Vanzetti St.

[2] Khrushchev confirmed this officially at the 22nd Party Congress.

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[Next, Ivanov gives a lengthy analysis of a translation, published in *Novy Mir* in November, 1955, of a speech made by Thomas Mann in Chicago after the war and printed under the title, "My Times." By means of frequent quotations from the German text, Ivanov shows that the Russian version, the work of two women translators, L. Chernaya and D. Melnikova, is a deliberate distortion of Thomas Mann's thought for the purposes of Russian propaganda.]

IN THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATION, Thomas Mann's speech is transformed, dishonestly, into an instrument of Soviet propaganda, although the Soviet reader without a knowledge of German can have no suspicion of the fact. And all this is done to suggest to the average Soviet citizen—who is already sufficiently brain-washed, as it is!—the very banal reflection: see how badly everything is going in the capitalist countries and how admirable are all our Soviet achievements! And the evidence is supplied not by Communists, but by objective, bourgeois writers, such as Thomas Mann!

What is the purpose in encouraging such productions? According to the eloquent exponents of Soviet policy, whose task it is to mould our people ideologically, the aim is "to strengthen friendship between peoples." (The same aim lies behind the "struggle for peace" that Konstantin Simonov "organises" in his play, *The Fourth*, with all that respect for principle to be expected of a Soviet writer.) This is a tissue of lies and deceit, and there is nothing new about it. What is new and original in Chernaya and Melnikova's translation is that the person entrusted with the task of lying and deceiving the Russian reader is Thomas Mann, in other words a writer whom the Russian reader likes and respects. If the vulgar propaganda produced by the authors of the translation had been the work of writers such as Sobolev, Surkov, Gribachov, Kochetov, or Sofronov (to mention only a few, and even then, not the most egregious!), the reader would have grinned sardonically; he knows that these writers only exist for the purpose of deceiving him. But in this instance, the language required by the big-wigs of Soviet propaganda is being addressed to the Soviet reader by Thomas Mann, that is, by someone who has the reputation of being an honourable man.

The responsibility for the deliberate distortion of Thomas Mann's article lies with the two "culture-workers" (one may wonder how justifiable the term "*culture*-worker" is). But they did not operate in isolation. They worked collectively, together with their friends-and-comrades, those members of the Writers' Union who share their ideas. And of these the foremost are Konstantin Simonov and Konstantin Fedin.

The foreign reader may be surprised at this mention of the names of two honoured creative writers, who have managed to reach quite a wide audience among Western intellectuals and even to acquire a certain prestige in the West. But there is no cause for surprise. Chernaya and Melnikova's translation appeared in *Novy Mir* at a time when the review was being edited by the liberal Konstantin Simonov who, a little later, took the bold step of publishing Dudinstev's novel, *Not by Bread Alone*, for which action he almost ended

> *His sorrowful but agitated days*
> *On the remote steppes of Usbekie*
> *Far from his beloved Italy....*

As editor, then, Simonov helped in the carrying out of the dark designs of L. Chernaya and her friend. Were you *sincere*, Konstantin Mikhaïlovitch, when you passed the translation for publication? Of course, to justify himself, Simonov can always mutter something about not being well acquainted with the "foreign lingo."

But how can the other Konstantin—Konstantin Fedin—justify himself? When *Novy Mir* published the essay, Konstantin Fedin was a member of the editorial committee of the review. As first secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union, a *sincere* admirer of German culture, a close student of the work of Thomas Mann, President of the U.S.S.R.-Germany Friendship Society and with a perfect mastery of the German language, Konstantin Fedin knew what he was about. Khrushchev has said of him, "He is a man with a deep sense of party spirit." True enough! (But perhaps he too will say he "sincerely thought," was "profoundly convinced," etc....)

Let us return to *The Fourth* by Simonov. The example of the speech by Thomas Mann (and hundreds of similar ones might be quoted) shows that Simonov is well acquainted with the behaviour of "bourgeois" journalists, including "American" ones. He had no lack of documentary material out of which to create his hero. Moreover, this example leads us to think that the "sincerity" of our writers—even of the best!—is very relative. The poem *Sacco and Vanzetti* may allow its author to say that he sincerely believed in the American origins of Kirov's murder but the translation of Thomas Mann's speech puts him in a difficult position, because the "editorial note" he appended to it ("a number of cuts have been made in the text") will not spare him from feelings of shame.

The Russian variant of "My Times" is an eloquent illustration of the thesis about "sincerity" put forward by Dementyev, Mechenko, and Lomidzé. And, although Simonov and his like may console themselves by saying that, after all, they allowed themselves to be carried away

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by a collective psychosis for the greater glory of so-called Socialist Collectivism, it nevertheless remains true that the base actions to which they stooped have left conscience-pangs in those who have not been tempered in the fire of the Party spirit. "What can we do when our consciences are troubling us?" they ask themselves. "How can we go on living?" The "progressive" nature of the play, *The Fourth*, is said to lie precisely in the fact that it puts these questions. But the most honest of our writers are still not capable of raising them except in the form of a drama set in "American" life. And it is precisely the "progressive" nature of this form that I should like to question....

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the hero of *The Fourth*, while carrying out his infamous deeds, should occasionally suffer cruel torment and feel disgusted with what he is doing. One day, after describing one of his typically dastardly actions, he says:

> And suddenly, I was so sickened, I felt so depressed that I got drunk. Then I went back to the hotel and stuck the barrel of a pistol into my mouth.... And then, at the very last minute, Betsy turned up. She still likes to remind herself of the fact that she saved my life on that occasion. [Betsy is his second wife, whom he has married for reasons of self-interest "in the American manner."]

Yes, it often happens that Soviet writers and journalists are sickened; and they get drunk, downing liquor until they cannot take any more. Sholokhov drinks, so do Tvardovsky, Olga Bergholtz and Svetlov. Even Simonov himself is no mean tippler; and he not only drinks but has also written some very fine passages on this very subject.... They drink like "real men." As for sticking the barrel of a pistol into their mouths, not all are capable of that. Fadeyev did it, of course, and no Betsy came in at the last moment. And in the obituary notice in *Pravda*, the Central Committee of the Party could find nothing better to say than that Fadeyev was an alcoholic.

The reason why Soviet writers and journalists spend the better part of their lives in a state of tipsiness is explained as follows by Simonov in his play:

> HE: Sometimes, when I'm drinking, I feel like letting the whole thing go to hell [*i.e.*, life].
> THE SECOND PILOT: And you drink a lot?
> HE: Yes, and do you know why?
> THE SECOND PILOT: It's well known. Anybody with an uneasy conscience is drawn towards the bottle. It's true that some of you never drink at all, but those ones are the incurable swine.

It is true that there are also some who don't drink.

Simonov is not the only person to be exercised by the problems of conscience of the Soviet intelligentsia, whether writers or journalists, and by their responsibility towards the people. There is, in Soviet literature, one writer who has broached the subject in Russian, so half-heartedly, however, that "broached" is hardly the word. He has merely mentioned the subject in passing. But at least he did so in Russian, without resorting to American allegories. I am referring to Ehrenburg. He found the courage to admit that, on witnessing the bloody crimes that were being perpetrated around him, he kept quiet and went on living "with clenched teeth." Everybody knows the effect produced by Ehrenburg's admission; he was so harassed as to be brought to the verge of a heart-attack. He was thus given to understand that he had not yet adequately mastered the "science of silence," which is, as he himself says, "one of the most difficult sciences." Its laws have proved too complex for Ehrenburg, who has failed to understand them completely.

The events arising from the publication of his memoirs are worth dwelling on. In the first place, because they are interesting in themselves, and secondly because of the light they throw on the attitude of our "American" intellectuals, who promise us, with the voice of the hero in Simonov's play, that they will be honest and never commit an act of cowardice again in their lives.

In several chapters of his book, *Men, Years, Life*, Ehrenburg clearly states that, from the 'thirties onwards, he and many others realised the criminal nature of the internal policy of the Soviet Government and of the party. Ehrenburg has not yet discussed the post-war years, since his memoirs do not go beyond the outbreak of war. I will merely add that the ultra-reactionary policy of anti-Semitism, which took the form of a campaign against the so-called "cosmopolitanism" of the post-war years—a campaign meant to be the ideological preparation for a catastrophe fortunately averted in 1953—was fully understood by everyone, both by those who cultivated anti-Semitism and by their victims. But, of course, no one realised what the ultimate aim of the policy was; this only became evident in 1953. Ehrenburg's memoirs deal mainly with the silence of the 'thirties; as Ehrenburg confesses, those who knew what was happening at the time were obliged to keep quiet.

His admission aroused the wildest fury, and it was decided that Ehrenburg's thinking must be "straightened out." For this purpose *Izvestia*, which is edited by the most prosperous of Soviet sons-in-law, commissioned an article from V. Ermilov, who very willingly complied

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with the party directive. A few weeks later, the main points of his article were taken up in speeches by L. Ilichev, the chairman of the Ideological Commission of the Central Committee, and by the First Chairman, N. Khrushchev himself. The basic idea in the article which, incidentally, sparked off the campaign against Soviet abstract art (the very existence of which was unknown, up to December, 1962, to more than a few dozen Soviet citizens out of 200 million; now they have all heard about it), boils down to the statement that Ehrenburg is a slanderous liar. No one in the 'thirties ever realised that the repression carried out in those years was criminal. It was Khrushchev who expressed this idea with the greatest "authority." "We are asked," he said, "whether the leading members of the party knew at the time, for instance, that people were being arrested. Yes, they knew. But did they know that perfectly innocent people were being arrested? No, they did not. They had confidence in Stalin," etc.

Ehrenburg is not a party leader, but he realised that innocent people were being arrested. The leaders are supposed not to have noticed this because of their confidence in Stalin. In fifteen or twenty years' time, before an audience similar to the one assembled for the meeting of the Central Committee of the Party on the 7th and 8th March, 1963, some demagogic politician will be in duty bound to coo in dulcet tones: "We are asked if the party leaders knew that on the 8th March, 1963, N. S. Khrushchev was a barefaced liar. No, they did not know. They had confidence in Khrushchev...."

I AM NOT a party leader. I am merely an observer ot contemporary events. And for the benefit of future historians, I leave this record which bears no relation to memoirs: on the 10th March, 1963, when Khrushchev's speech was published, all the Soviet intellectuals not in positions of authority realised perfectly well that Khrushchev had told a lie. All of them, without exception. And, having realised it, each acted according to his character and his possibilities.

Honoured Nikita Sergeyivich, we understand that your situation is difficult. You twist and turn like an eel. But although you may not be afraid of God, at least fear the politician who will eventually take your place and demand that you should be cleared of your misdeeds in order that his "authority" may be firmly established. When a statesman tells a lie, he ought at least to think of his interests and ensure the security of his rear. But you neglect this elementary rule of high politics.

Remember how, at the 20th Congress, you told us the touching story of your visit to Stalin, who had invited you, along with your then dear friend, N. Bulganin. "We went, not knowing whether we would come back alive," you said, weeping on each other's shoulders. When you wondered about escaping with your lives, did you consider yourselves as spies working for "some foreign power?" Or had you guessed that you could be despatched into the next world "just like that, for no reason at all?" And remember the explanation you gave us of Ordzhonikidzé's suicide.

And why, into the bargain, do you allow your son-in-law to publish in *Izvestia* reminiscences like those of A. Kravchenko about Krupskaya [Lenin's wife]? (It appeared on the 8th March, 1963, the very day you made your speech.) "Nadyezhda Konstantinovna," wrote A. Kravchenko, "knew, and understood very well, what was happening in the political life of the country in the 'thirties." She knew, and understood very well. And she did not raise her voice. She kept silent, like Ehrenburg....

Khrushchev's speech is distinguished, so to speak, by its "authority," but Ermilov's articles are outpourings of the most remarkable baseness. Ermilov knows perfectly well that he has nothing to fear in kicking Ehrenburg when he is down; no-one will be able to attack him, Ermilov, because the authorities will protect him. Mocking at Ehrenburg's silence, Ermilov writes: "As is well-known, another postulate, at once moral and aesthetic, has made its appearance in literature: I cannot keep silent! But there is a popular proverb which does ironical justice to this postulate: Eat mushroom pie and keep your tongue behind your teeth."

Ermilov's allusion is clear; if, he says, Ehrenburg knew and said nothing, he was just a hypocrite, since he did not refrain from making his contribution to the collective panegyrics addressed to Stalin. Ilichev, too, emphasised this point. But Ermilov explains to Ehrenburg: "You knew nothing, you understood nothing, and you were in the same position *as everyone else*" (*i.e.*, as Ermilov). And Ermilov continues: "It is very doubtful whether Ehrenburg possessed that 'special clearsightedness' suggested by his self-portrait. In all probability, Ehrenburg became so fascinated with the postulate of silence that he did not even realise that he was slandering himself in the first place."

What did Ehrenburg say to all this? It must be admitted that his reply to Ermilov's insinuations leaves a sad, even lamentable, impression. It is now high time people stopped keeping quiet. But Ehrenburg is content to mumble a few words and to push the door ajar a little, without bringing himself to tell the whole

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truth. He still remains a pupil of that school in which "the science of silence" is taught with the help of chains and the knout. An unreliable pupil, admittedly, but one who cannot make up his mind to leave the course.

V. Ermilov is the man to whom our literature is indebted for the persecution inflicted on Mayakovsky, but Mayakovsky was not the only person he hurried into the grave. Since the process of rehabilitation began, the secret of the camps has ceased to be a secret and there are now a great many people who know that Ermilov belongs to that powerful body of Soviet scholars and scientists which also includes Professor Elsberg. We know of many comrades who spent time in concentration camps, after being denounced by Ermilov. The "scientific treatises" that V. Ermilov, a doctor of science, wrote for Beria's office, must still be preserved in the State Security archives, if they have not been destroyed. Of course, it is impossible to produce documents to prove Ermilov's guilt, because his interests are firmly defended by the state. As for the stories told by the victims of his tender care, they are, of course, mere assertions. Can they be believed? In any case, even his victims, who know very well who denounced them but are not in possession of the original text of Ermilov's "special correspondence," are not in a position to unmask him.

It follows that Ermilov was in the same case "as everyone else." He suffered the tragedy in common with the rest of the nation. He did not understand at all. He had confidence in Stalin.

Even if we admit for a moment that Ermilov may not have been an informer and may never have written denunciations, what can one say about those people who did? Were they in the same position "as everyone else?"

If the present Central Committee of the party were asked to publish a list of all the informers who have shown themselves to be worthy exponents of Socialist vigilance, what would the reply be? The army of contemptible creatures is so vast that it cannot be attacked with any chance of success. And if it is remembered that informers are, again to-day, being recruited among the student population, it is easy to understand how keen the Central Committee is to make the situation clear by publishing adequate documentation.

Nevertheless, the situation is clear; the Soviet intelligentsia of the 'thirties was divided into two parts. The first consisted of the oppressors (those who wrote denunciations, invented "cases" on non-existent foundations, played the parts of judges and prosecutors and, by their writings in reviews and newspapers, prepared the ground, ideologically, for all the crimes); the other of the oppressed. In both camps, everybody knew what was happening; the victims sensed the truth by intuition and the executioners were acting deliberately.

Air-Marshal G. Vorozheikin has supplied a very typical piece of evidence in this connection. Writing in *Izvestia* on the 14th July, 1963, about General Byelov, the Air-Marshal said: "In January, 1938, I. P. Byelov was suddenly summoned to Moscow. He went there full of foreboding. His fears were well founded. On arriving in Moscow, he was arrested and shot."

"Foreboding?" Ermilov will say: "This is doubtful. It is doubtful whether Byelov could have had 'that special clearsightedness' that emerges from Vorozheikin's portrait of him. He foresaw nothing at all! He cannot possibly have done so."

But I have another interesting little idea to submit to Ermilov: when Vorozheikin declares that Byelov was full of foreboding, where does his knowledge come from? Perhaps Byelov confided his feelings to Vorozheikin. But, in this case, why did Vorozheikin keep quiet so long? Did he too act according to the laws of "the science of silence?"

Here, too, is what General Gorbatov writes about the death of Yakir: "It was rumoured that Yakir was about to be recalled from the Ukraine and given command of another military region. Many of us, and myself in particular, had a presentiment of imminent disaster....We were not mistaken." (*General Yakir*, Moscow, 1963, p. 176).

Another case of foreboding! Are all these people in league, or what? What do you say, Ermilov? And here, in addition, is what this same Gorbatov writes about the arrest of another of his fellow-officers: "Amongst others who were arrested was my former superior, Colonel P. P. Grigoriev. On this occasion, a public meeting was held at divisional headquarters. I attended and, unable to control my feelings, I declared outright that I did not believe in Grigoriev's guilt and expressed the hope that the Security Services would take the matter in hand and free the innocent. Alas, my remarks cost me dear." Gorbatov's sincere and humane behaviour was paid for by a long stay in Kolyma.

Gorbatov was not alone of his kind. There were many other honest people who, in the midst of the "patriotic" collective psychosis created by the party propaganda machine, forgot their personal interest and "could not control their feelings." They always suffered the same fate and everyone knew what it was. Their example was a lesson to others, who learned to "control themselves." This explains the develop-

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ment of the "science of silence," the laws of which still prevail to-day.

Ehrenburg, who has spoken out about this "science" so inopportunely, was one of those who ought to have been arrested at the height of the Stalinist era. Why was he allowed to go free? I am convinced that he knows the reason, although he is content, in his memoirs, to grimace with coquettish bewilderment. However, there is an age at which it would be more becoming to renounce coquetry. To ensure the success of the policy of concealed anti-Semitism pursued for years by the Communist Party, there had to be Jews of the kind that the anti-Semites, with characteristic delicacy, refer to as "In-Yids." Whenever it was necessary to camouflage some manifestation of anti-Semitism, Ehrenburg was commissioned to write an article or to make a speech somewhere or other, in order to proclaim that anti-Semitism was unknown in the Soviet Union. This he did. In return, he was gently treated, because our political authorities were well aware of his popularity in the West; the progressive Western intelligentsia, including the Communists, had confidence in Ehrenburg.

WHAT I AM WRITING HERE is not intended to brand him with the mark of shame. Judging Ehrenburg's life and activities as a whole, I must say I have a certain respect for him. I imagine that the Western reader will think this attitude ludicrous and even nonsensical. But he must try to understand the conditions in which we live, since it is only in the light of these conditions that the conduct of the 'thirties can be judged. If Ehrenburg had been totally honest and had refused to play his part, he would have been liquidated and some other actor would have been pushed into the vacant place. This other person would have played his part as required at the time, but would not to-day have written *Men, Years, Life*. For instance, the Jews who were "organised" in 1963 to reply to Bertrand Russell will leave no memoirs like those of Ehrenburg. And Ehrenburg's conduct to-day will lead history to forgive him part of his former sins. In telling some truths about Ehrenburg, I am merely trying to give a clear view of events to put things into perspective. I have no intention of stigmatising Ehrenburg, although what I am saying will, very probably, not be to his taste.

TO LIVE UNDER our Soviet régime and to concern oneself with ideological questions without stooping to base actions is quite impossible. In the Soviet Union, whoever is involved in ideological work is inevitably guilty of base actions, to a greater or lesser degree; this is an effect of the system, and no-one can escape from it. When I am found out and brought to judgment, I shall be accused of playing a double game, and it is true that what I write in the official press bears no resemblance to my clandestine writings. On this score, I shall have no reply to make. I should only like to explain in advance that, given our relationship with our rulers, there is no way of remaining honest other than by playing a double game. Moreover, we know that our masters do likewise; Khrushchev is playing a double game, Ilichev is too, and so are their underlings. But they are doing it to further lies, whereas I am doing it on behalf of the truth. That is the difference between us and, in my view, it is an essential one. Ehrenburg, too, is playing a double game on behalf of the truth. But not consistently, not right through to the end. That is why he does not give satisfaction to those who want the truth, and still less so, of course, to the professional liars. For the latter, his case is a simple one: like Sofronov, they cannot read Ehrenburg's memoirs "without a feeling of repulsion." By writing his memoirs, Ehrenburg has fallen between two stools. I cannot say to what extent this position suits him. But I must emphasise the difference in principle between his position in the 'thirties and his position to-day.

In the past, the position of Ehrenburg and his "companions in silence" was tragic. To understand what was happening and condemn it inwardly... and not even to be allowed to remain quiet but to have to write odes in praise of Stalin, knowing all the time that any attempt to denounce the crimes would be madness—that was tragic. I cannot disapprove of Ordzhonikidzé's suicide. My attitude to Fadeyev's is slightly different. I cannot condemn Ehrenburg's silence when Stalin was in power. The resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union about the "liquidation of the personality cult and its consequences" (published in 1956) is not without a grain of truth. It stated, in so many words:

> Immediately after Stalin's death, the Leninist nucleus of the Central Committee [what exactly is this Leninist nucleus? history will no doubt have many curious things to reveal about it] undertook a determined struggle against the personality cult and its tragic consequences. The question may be asked: why did these people not rise openly against Stalin and remove him from power? In the conditions which had developed at the time, this was impossible.... Any action against Stalin, in the existing conditions, would have been misunderstood by the people, and it was not a question of any lack of personal courage. It is clear that, given the situation, any-

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one who had risen against Stalin would not have been supported by the people....

"Rise against Stalin," "Act against Stalin" ...what can these expressions mean if, as Khrushchev declared on March 8th, 1963, "they," *i.e.* the "Leninist nucleus," "the party leaders," knew nothing and "had confidence in Stalin?" In the rather confused atmosphere of the first weeks following the 20th Party Congress, the Central Committee of the Party was able, of its own accord, to express a few shreds of truth. But to-day, going back over the past, it is trying to wipe out what it admitted rather hastily in 1956.

Yes, the position of people like Ehrenburg was tragic in the 'thirties. It was not without reason that Meyerhold, who understood what was happening, changed *The Misfortune Of Being Too Clever*[3] into *Woe To The Spirit.*

And to-day? To-day, Ehrenburg has put himself into an exceptionally stupid position, in which any vulture of the Ermilov variety can cover him with filth. What Ehrenburg is trying to say is that, given the conditions of our political system, a man who realises the misdeeds of the government and the Central Committee is not in a position to express his opinions publicly. But they at once put a knife to Ehrenburg's throat and ask: "Well, what is it you disapprove of? Soviet power? the achievements of the people?"—"No, of course not," Ehrenburg replies stupidly, "I like Soviet power 'in my own way' and I have nothing against it"..."Oh, so you have nothing against it?" Ermilov sneers, "You like it 'in your own way'? ...Soviet power has spared your life, given you a flat, a *dacha* and mushroom pie....And what about you? Have you forgotten the proverbial saying: Eat mushroom pie and keep your tongue behind your teeth!" And Ehrenburg, after showing the tip of his tongue, is obliged to put it back behind his teeth.

In Stalin's day, the *postulate* (to use Ermilov's learned term) "I cannot keep silent" would not have achieved its purpose. But to-day it is precisely this postulate which should govern the behaviour of any Soviet writer. At the present time, the inevitable sacrifice accepted by a writer who declared "I cannot keep quiet" would have enormous political repercussions. But for this to be so, it would be necessary to speak out loudly, not in a half-allusive way like Ehrenburg, although what he has done has its usefulness. To avoid being either equivocal or stupid, a man in Ehrenburg's position ought to tell the whole truth at the top of his voice. Even if the result is heart-failure, at least he will have told the truth, instead of just hinting at it. In any case, our ultra-reactionary anti-Semites will see to it that even hints are paid for with a heart-attack, so he will suffer either way. They know how old he is.

But in judging Ehrenburg, we must also take something else into account: (1) not every man, at the age of seventy, is robust enough to do what Leo Tolstoy did; (2) Leo Tolstoy had a clear conscience, whereas Ehrenburg has compromised; (3) whatever difficulties Leo Tolstoy had to cope with, in his day a Count was able to express himself freely in the press.

After the meeting of March, 1963, a glass or two of Ehrenburg's tainted blood is the only thing that can give pleasure to the henchmen of the reactionary party. But the change now under way in the consciences of Soviet citizens will be paid for by thousands of Ehrenburgs. In considering the matter from the point of view of the interests of the Central Committee, it is essential to realise that the Central Committee made a mistake in March, 1963. Its nerves got the better of it and it flew off the handle. Its behaviour revealed its true nature as the protector of the worst kind of Soviet reaction. The sinister joke referred to in our newspapers as "a cordial meeting between the party and the creative intelligentsia" has the same meaning for intellectuals as January 9th, 1905, had for the Russian people as a whole. Every Soviet intellectual is now faced with the choice of following either Gubachov, Sofronov, and Alexander Prokofiev or Ehrenburg, Victor Nekrassov, and Paustovsky.

"Abstractionism," Alexander Prokofiev declared, "is the brother of cosmopolitanism." I should say, on the contrary, that the frenzied dance initiated by the Central Committee of the Party in March, 1963, is sister to the political campaign of 1948–1949 [Zhdanovism].

The "March theses" found their logical development in the speeches made by Khrushchev and Ilichev at the plenary session of the Central Committee in June, 1963, which had itself been preceded by the dissolution of the party organisation of the Moscow Section of the Writers' Union. Another factor had been the interview, liberal in tone, that Tvardovsky had given to Henry Shapiro [U.S. foreign correspondent in Moscow], and the repentant editorial published by Tvardovsky in the April number of *Novy Mir.*

As long as the din was being raised by Sofronov, Prokofiev and their supporters, Tvar-

[3] A famous comedy by Griboïedov (1795–1829), which Meyerhold produced in the 'thirties under the new title.

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dovsky said nothing, although he had been brusquely called upon to make public amends. I thought he would continue to keep quiet and remain aloof from this policy. Unfortunately, that is not what happened. Tvardovsky broke his silence.

As the person responsible for the editorial published in the review under his editorship, he burdened his conscience with a sin that is far from venial; he sided with Ermilov. He wrote as follows about Ehrenburg's memoirs:

> As long as Ehrenburg's memoirs dealt with matters of the distant past, they contained much that was acceptable as the living and objective testimony of an eye-witness. However, now that the story is approaching our own times, certain erroneous tendencies are revealed—a certain subjectivism on the part of the author, which shows itself in enthusiasm for "Left-Wing art," in a so-called "theory of silence" and in a biased presentation of certain important events of the past.

Yes. "As long as it was a question of matters of the distant past," there was a great deal that was acceptable in Ehrenburg's memoirs. This was because the present leaders of the party have no direct connection with matters which happened long ago. But "when the story approaches our own times" (it is worth noting that the memoirs stop at the outbreak of war, at a point which is separated from "our own times" by a gap of more than twenty years), there is nothing acceptable in Ehrenburg's memoirs. It is easy to guess why.

How, indeed, could Ehrenburg's memories of what was done between 1946 and 1953 be "acceptable," when it was all carried out under the immediate control of the present members of the Central Committee? Ehrenburg's many chronological digressions threatened certain highly placed readers with some extremely uncomfortable moments.

If the most elementary freedom of the press existed in the Soviet Union, Tvardovsky would never have dared to put his name to this article. But in the condition in which we live, Tvardovsky runs no risk of public obloquy, any more than Simonov does for having written *The Fourth* or for what he did when he occupied Tvardovsky's place on the Central Committee and on *Novy Mir*. But Tvardovsky, like Simonov, is threatened by the judgment of his own conscience. It is interesting to speculate about the form Tvardovsky will eventually give to the story of the sin he has recently committed....

THE PRESSURE that has been successfully exerted on Tvardovsky is part of an old method which proved its worth in the blessed days of Stalinism, when people were compelled to give up their opinions in the name of the "Marxist-Leninist" unity required by the authorities. The present leaders of the party, who flaunt their "Leninism" at every turn, are wholly steeped in Stalinism. The same story is beginning all over again, this time in Lenin's name. The use of the name of Lenin was one of the methods of Stalinist deceit. Another was the disbandment of party organisations which the Central Committee finds irksome. Stalin began in this way and then went on to make arrests. The meeting of the Central Committee in June, 1963, clearly revealed the nature of Khrushchev's "Leninism." His speech on that occasion was anything but original: "To those comrades who refuse to march under this flag (*i.e.*, Khrushchev's flag) but who, on the contrary, try to hold us back and to put spokes in the wheels while a severe struggle is in progress, we say: stop behaving like this, because you are fighting on the side of our class enemies."

All those who tried to "put spokes" in Stalin's wheel were christened "enemies of the people" and despatched to the next world, because they were "fighting on the side of our class enemies." All those who try to "put spokes" in Khrushchev's wheel will—to use the present-day "Leninist" terminology—be "severely punished," "firmly held in check" and "soundly beaten," because they are "agents of bourgeois ideology in the midst of Soviet society."

We know what is meant by "severely punished" and "soundly beaten"—even better than Khrushchev does himself....

> [After recalling the servile applause with which Simonov greeted Khrushchev's brutal ultimatum to Soviet intellectuals, Ivanov asks how it is that Simonov's *The Fourth*, in spite of its allusions to the political system which have certainly not escaped the censors, is still being performed. There is a profound reason for this.]

To understand the reason, it is worthwhile analysing the reactions aroused by Andrei Voznesensky's poem, *The Triangular Pear*, which was also devoted to a "denunciation of America" by means of the same method of "Socialist Realism" as that used by Simonov in his play.

A detailed study of Voznesensky's charades and political puzzles was made by the critic, V. Nazarenko, in an article which appeared in the review *Zvezda* in July, 1962, under the title "Digressions or Aggression?" Although his analysis of the facts of the case is undeniably accurate and conscientious, Nazarenko is far from deducing from them the conclusion that they inescapably imply. Nazarenko accuses Voznesensky of having a *Right-wing* attitude and criticises him for the fact that "on the great front of the struggle for a Communist

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education through art, this publication is not only a digression but a retreat."

This conclusion is at variance with the critic's whole argument, since his analysis goes to prove that the poem, if read between the lines, is an act of aggression—but against whom?

Nazarenko's aim was to demonstrate the ideological depravity of *The Triangular Pear,* in detail, calmly and competently, without shouting or hurling insults. This he certainly did, but presumably without reflecting properly on what he was about. As a result, his analysis is much more "depraved" than the poem itself. Nazarenko was intent on one thing: Voznesensky, the formalist, must be shown in his true light. But our ultra-reactionary writers, who would have no compunction in breaking Voznesensky's arms and legs or cracking his skull into the bargain, must be saying, in connection with Nazarenko's article: "What a brick he's dropped!"

[Ivanov goes on to show that Nazarenko realises that the "America" described by Voznesensky is a symbol and that, when Voznesensky speaks of "the oppression of the Negroes," he is thinking primarily "of the fate of poets, as he sees it."]

Nazarenko's scrupulous analysis of Voznesensky's symbols leads him to state that the author of *The Triangular Pear*, after his visit to the United States, has written a poem which has nothing to do with America. What, then, is the subject? Nazarenko ought to have answered this question, but he does not. After writing "it is clear that the principal, if not the sole, aim of the poet was to discover... *himself in himself*," Nazarenko took fright at something and suddenly abandoned logic in order to explain one of Voznesensky's symbols by another.

Voznesensky discovers "himself in himself" to the extent in which he discovers the Soviet Union in America. And the poet's slogan: "You are looking for India and you will find America," if given its proper sense, has an obvious meaning: "You are looking for America and you will find the Soviet Union!..."

Similarly, when Voznesensky tells how *"we are trampled underfoot,"* he is obviously thinking of the "cordial and friendly meetings" between Soviet writers and members of the government. And when he says, "*The world is crying out!*" we know, from unimpeachable sources, what that cry is.

Here, for instance, is a reliable piece of information, supplied by Yuri Zhukov: "The bourgeois press has started an uproar. It is rushing to the defence of those comrades who have been rightly criticised by the party." Here, too, is a statement by Ilichev: "The steps taken by the party in matters of artistic creation have caused a violent reaction abroad. Not only do bourgeois ideologists raise their voices in hypocritical lamentations about a 'crisis' in Soviet culture, they also undertake, demagogically, to act as defenders of our artistic intelligentsia...." But what was Nazarenko afraid of? Why did he avoid the logical conclusion? He was simply afraid of the truth, and not without reason.

Voznesensky is now insulted and subject to the most abominable treatment. But it is obviously impossible for anyone to admit publicly that Voznesensky in *The Triangular Pear*, like Simonov in *The Fourth*, has written things about Soviet life which, according to our propaganda, could only be written by enemies of the Soviet people. To do so would be to admit that there is a conscious protest on the part of Soviet writers against the criminal policy of the Central Committee. It would also be to admit the existence of ideological disagreements. But in Soviet Russia, no ideological disagreement with the Central Committee is possible. Unity, monolithic unity, is the order of the day. We all have confidence in Khrushchev, just as, formerly, Khrushchev had confidence in Stalin....

Ivan Ivanovich Ivanov

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LETTERS

Burning Vatsyayana

WHAT'S ALL this bla, bla, bla, about the "Kama Sutra"? The "Kama Sutra" is just an opener of doors to the pleasures of the senses. What's so very wrong or strange about that? At the most, it only proves that, Indians, like everybody else, are interested in sex and love-play. Therefore, the "Kama Sutra" needs no defence, no apologies, no philosophies, no air of mystery, no gildings— and no face-saving explanations.

BEGAN J. DARUWALLA

Ahmedabad,
India

"Atlantic Dreams. . . ."

THE THEME of Lord Gladwyn's article entitled "Atlantic Dreams and Realities" will make an immediate appeal to all who believe that this field of foreign policy must not be allowed to lie fallow for long.

As one of the contributors to the pamphlet on the Atlantic Community to which he refers and which was published by the Conservative Political Centre, I must, however, mildly protest that he does it less than justice. For example, he has taken the reference to backing horses out of context by applying it to Atlantic or European alternatives. In fact, it was applied only to political steps in Europe (such as a revised Fouchet plan, a strengthened W.E.U., or Britain in Europe's present policy) and I have little doubt that the authors of the pamphlet would be prepared to back Lord Gladwyn's own runner or at least a similar one from the same stable.

He seems also to be guilty of having axed one or two trees and having missed the wood. The main purpose of the pamphlet was to warn that our failure to involve ourselves in European developments in the '50s was in danger of being repeated in an Atlantic setting in the late '60s; for example, our grudging attitude to the multilateral force and our failure to take up the idea of a special intergovernmental commission on Atlantic Unity called for by the distinguished citizens who wrote the Declaration of Paris, January, 1962. Such an involvement implies the acceptance by this country of the "community" approach in both a European and Atlantic context.

Lord Gladwyn's main criticism, however, relates to the so-called Stikker Plan and perhaps I might say a word about this. The Secretary-General of NATO addressing the NATO Parliamentarians' Conference in 1961 stated: "Without prejudicing the rights of producing countries, the political decision on the use of nuclear weapons could be taken—after an appreciation of the necessity for it by the Supreme Allied Commanders—by a majority of weighted votes. I suggest this only as a personal idea. . . ." M. Spaak, his predecessor as Secretary-General, also came down on the side of majority voting on at least certain specified subjects before the Council and by way of refinement weighted voting has since been suggested by an American specialist in these matters to ensure that a decision could be blocked, for example, either by the United States and Canada; or by the United States and either the United Kingdom or France, Germany or Italy; or by these three larger European countries together; or by any six countries equal to one-third plus one of the Council members. There are various possibilities.

The idea of a small Executive Committee with majority voting for defined purposes has been put forward both by General Norstad and in the form of the so-called Stikker Plan, and impracticable though these may be at this stage at least the views of those on the spot should command some respect. Certainly there are difficulties; but Lord Gladwyn himself recognises that a major difficulty stands in the way of his own proposal, judging by one short but tentative paragraph referring to General de Gaulle's veto which contains the words "assuming" "somehow" "perhaps" and "possibly." The General's attitude imposes a very big if indeed; and it was the argument of the Atlantic Community pamphlet that even if he remains adamant, we should press on with interim Atlantic measures, such as the Kennedy Round, a strengthened North Atlantic Council and so on. Perhaps one should also ask Lord Gladwyn to define more clearly what he means by the term "Partnership."

As the Atlantic Community pamphlet frankly admitted the difficulties of waiving the unanimity rule in defence matters (page 27), the main difference between us then is one of timing. The late President Kennedy in his Frankfurt speech in June seemed to think that the European and the Atlantic Communities should be built contemporaneously:

> "The Atlantic Community will not soon become a single overarching superstate. But practical steps toward stronger common purpose are well within our means . . . in the far future there may be a great new union for us all. But for the present, there is plenty for all to do in building new and enduring connections."

But when all is said and done, both Lord Gladwyn and the authors of the pamphlet agree that the immediate steps are our entry into Europe as soon as possible, the successful conclusion of the Kennedy Round, measures for increased world liquidity and the strengthening of the NATO Parliamentarians' Conference and the OECD. It is not yet possible to assess the affect of President Kennedy's assassination on all this, but let the last word be with him in the same speech:

> "So we are all idealists. We are all visionaries. Let it not be said of this Atlantic generation that we left ideals and visions to the past, the purpose and determination to our adversaries."

DAVID BARTON

London

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Lord Gladwyn Replies

BEFORE Miss Nora Beloff [ENCOUNTER, January] persuades herself that I am in favour of an independent undemocratic European Super-State, armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons largely under the control of the Germans, and quite possibly outside the Western Alliance, I would beg her, if not to re-read my article [ENCOUNTER, December], at any rate to consider my main argument which cannot have been clear in its original form.

If we want to have a United Western Europe (and I believe that Miss Beloff does in principle) then we must really consider what kind of body this could be and how it could function as an integral part of the Alliance. Everybody concerned, including the British Government, has admitted that the EEC, if it endures, must eventually produce a Political Authority of some kind. My article was designed to outline the shape of an immediately democratic Political Authority, which would be something less than a Federation and yet more than a simple Alliance, and to suggest that it could be formed even *before* our entry into the EEC. It was my further suggestion that this represented a minimum of political unity which could gradually be increased as time went on.

How could any such Authority *not* consider questions of Defence? If it avoided doing so, it would not be a Political Authority. But if it is to include defence, it must, as one of its first tasks, tackle the problem presented by the so-called "independent" French and British nuclear striking forces. As I said, it might decide (in the event perhaps of changes of government in the U.K. or France) to abolish these and concentrate on conventional forces only. Or it might define the lines of some co-operation between or co-ordination of the two forces. Or it might agree on a joint role for them in war within the framework of the Western Alliance. Eventually (and if it were decided not to scrap the forces) it would have to tackle, with the Americans, the vital question of command. If over the years the European Political Community develops into a real entity, it might be possible for the Americans to agree not to threaten the use of nuclear power in Europe without the consent of the European Political Community and *vice versa*. But that would be for the future. What is essential is that the decision what to do with these forces should be taken by the Europeans in the first instance and by nobody else. Even if we do not form a European Political Authority this question will arise to some extent anyhow. Will a new Labour administration really liquidate the British nuclear deterrent if the French hangs on to theirs and no separate deal with the Americans proves to be possible?

Can all this be reasonably represented as a sinister effort to unite Europe solely on the basis of the Bomb? Under my scheme the West German Government would be an equal member (along with the U.K., France, and Italy) of a workable European Union. There would be no question of the Germans being in an inferior position. Why, therefore, should it be assumed that the construction of a democratic European Political Community would in some way increase the aggressiveness of the Germans or render them more likely to try to do some deal with the Soviet Union? All these extraordinary apprehensions derive from the emotion created by merely linking the words "Bomb" and "Europe." Miss Beloff is apparently blind to the fact that two European nations already have the Bomb and can in the last resort, however suicidal this might be, threaten its independent use. Would she not agree, on reflection, that it might well be safer if neither had this exclusive right?

As for the "American Empire," what I actually said was that this might be the *best* solution, if only it were possible. If not, then either we go on as we are—which is obviously quite unsatisfactory and also dangerous—or we try, somehow or other, to construct that "Partnership" which, according to President Kennedy, was the only way of getting the Alliance to operate properly given the strong recovery of the various European Powers. If, however, we aim for a "Partnership," then we must consider the nature of the European Partner which we intend to create. If Miss Beloff has her way, it will never be created. Or just possibly it might be created without us and Miss Beloff will be left wringing her hands in an isolated (and perhaps not even a democratic) island.

MR. BARTON'S LETTER [see previous page] is a different matter. I am indeed sorry if I misrepresented him on the nature of the various "horses" which I think, on reflection, I probably did. But I never felt that the recommendations of the "Distinguished Citizens" (with the possible exception of that concerning the transformation of the NATO Parliamentarians into a Consultative Assembly) were likely to be accepted by Governments; and if even they are not acceptable what real present chance is there of applying "Community techniques" to some association of Europe and North America? It is only when some European body, some entity, is actually functioning in Western Europe that the Americans will be enabled to construct those links between the two sides of the Atlantic which obviously ought to be constructed. Until that time everything will be makeshift and the possibility of arriving at a common policy in some great emergency will be rather remote. "Weighted voting" cannot be applied in political matters because you could never get agreement on the weighting. As Dr. Hallstein has rightly pointed out, unless it is a question of physical absorption, you can't make a political entity out of one colossus and a number of minor powers.

Mr. Mayne [February] agrees with this. In reply to his queries, I would say this: under my scheme BENELUX would, in effect, be likely to provide one member of my streamlined Council and (in a certain sense) Scandinavia one too. Also, the full Council would no doubt meet at any rate once a year. Finally, no decisions of the Executive Committee (except on those matters in regard to which majority voting had been accepted) would be binding on countries not represented on it, or in a minority, if the Parliaments of such countries objected. I really cannot see why such a system

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London

THEY *were Changing the Guard at Buckingham Palace. The pageantry attracted two thousand people—and one baby elephant with golden antlers. Down the Mall plodded the elephant—heading slowly but surely for the Queen's home. The elephant was not a very big one—but it caused a jumbo-sized flap among the policemen who were on duty at the Palace. The police had their work cut out keeping the big crowd in check.*

The baby elephant—with antlers attached—was pulling a sleigh, and in the sleigh there was a man dressed up as Father Christmas. A man who the police thought looked suspiciously like Billy Smart, the circus chief. It all seemed very curious to the policemen. Especially since Christmas was so many months away!

The whole story was told at Bow Street Court yesterday. Attempts were made to divert the procession. A police officer got hold of the elephant's right ear and tried to pull him into Marlborough Road. The "mahout" got hold of the left ear and tried to steer him to the palace. Two police officers arrived on horses and the procession was diverted.

The explanation was that the elephant was a German one with a German keeper—and neither could understand what the police were saying. MIRROR & TELEGRAPH

New York

WHEN *Lauritz Melchior was before the public, one of the anecdotes that was part of his mystique was the Swan story. In the last act of "Lohengrin" the swan floats into view and there is some stage business around it. Apparently, on one occasion, a nervous stagehand pulled the swan out of sight too quickly. Melchior is supposed to have said, sotto voce, "When does the next swan leave?"*

But those in the know who heard this story about Melchior and the swan were apt to smile superior smiles. They knew better. They knew that the person who had uttered the immortal words, "When does the next swan leave?" was the great Leo Slezak.

Well, about two years ago I was doing some research, and in an English magazine of the eighteen-sixties, came across a little story about Joseph Tichatschek. Tichatschek (1807–1866) was a Bohemian tenor who created the roles of Rienzi and Tannhauser for Wagner. Lohengrin was also among his roles. And what do you think was the little story about Tichatschek in the magazine? He was singing Lohengrin, and the swan was pulled off too early. "When does the next swan leave?" Tichatschek wanted to know. NEW YORK TIMES

London

NEED OUR *system of censorship be so daft? Need it be such a ragbag of absurdities and inconsistencies? What other civilised country this side of the Iron Curtain puts such unnecessary shackles on its creative artists and writers? Or gives wide licence to strip-shows while reserving its wrath for its most serious writers? Where else would an internationally famous playwright have his work banned, or cut, as happened with Tennessee Williams, while nudes can wriggle suggestively in any smutty little club?* DAILY MAIL

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE *in America is fog-bound. This is hellish serious, more serious than who will be the next Republican nominee for the Presidency. If we cannot communicate clearly with one another, who can tell what our votes will mean? Two lousy forces are at work: (a) stencilism and (b) carbonic plague. They have in common only their hideous fear of straight talk. We cannot now say* "in colleges"*: we must say* "at the college level." *Nor can we say* "yearly," *things are now* "on an annual basis." *Who done this? Webster's Third? Here is one crime, I think that cannot be lain at their door. But at whom's?*

April no longer brings "showers," *it brings* "shower activity." *There is also* "flurry activity" *here, on a winter basis. Do we have* "fog"? *Goodness knows we do, but it is* "fog conditions" *which create* "chain reaction pile-ups" *on the New Jersey Turnpike. (The Turnpike is, of course, a* "facility," *just as Columbia University is a facility, at the college level.)*

Analysis, is giving way to "analysation," *by the way, to keep things straight* "at this time" *—and you'd better not be caught making a summary of things any more because what you're really after is a* "summarisation." *If it's a good summarisation it could lead to a significant* "breakthrough" *which could accelerate the toothpaste* "explosion" *and thus close the dental* "gap."

If a media of mass communication wants to be more than a passing phenomenon at a satisfactory profit level on any annual basis, it ought to contemplate a facility for more analysation of what in hell's name is being done to the English language by some "doee" *or* "doees" *unknown.* N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE

Berlin

THE PERFORMANCE *of the classics has had its difficulties in East Berlin. From "Antigone" and "Iphigenie" to "Don Carlos" and "Fidelio," there are dangerous moments when provocative applause suddenly wells up from the audience. Not infrequently lines have been changed, scenes rearranged. But who would have thought that Johann Strauss' "Fledermaus" would ever prove a political problem? Still, the whole third act does take place in a prison, and this is nowadays macabre enough. A high-point of the operetta is the comical cry of the prison warden, at which generations have laughed: "Herr Direktor, wir sind eingemauert (we are walled in)!" Happy times when this was still a joke. In the latest East Berlin production, the line is cut.* DIE WELT

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need be regarded as prejudicial to the smaller powers, who anyway would probably be well represented on the important Political Commission.

As regards "federalism," well, if you insist that a Political Community can only be found when the various Governments are prepared to accept the authority of a directly elected, sovereign European Parliament on which a European Executive will depend, you may very well wait for ever. The advantage of my scheme is that it provides a practical way of starting up an effective entity with the good-will of all the governments concerned and not over their dead bodies. Without such good-will you will never, short of a general revolution, get anything started up at all. But what will happen once you have got started nobody can tell. It may be that the members countries, once in the Community, will find it so congenial that they will demand much more far-reaching measures of unity. What, however, I myself think rather improbable is the emergence in Europe of a system well-suited to the needs, at the end of the 18th century, of the ex-British colonies in North America. I really hope that, if we ever do get going, we shall devise something rather better calculated than this to cope with the overwhelming pressures of the nuclear age.

FINALLY, I was of course delighted to read Willy Brandt's [March] favourable comments on my plan. For the Mayor of Berlin is one of those men of power who may be able one day to help put the plans of the theorists into actual execution. But if he does think well of my plan, and also believes that Western Europe must stop bickering and come together, at any rate politically, in the near future, it would be wonderful if he could give the plan his positive support. "Lord Gladwyn," he says, "proposes *one* way of providing a common answer." (My italics.) But he himself proposes no other way. All he lays down is that "Atlantic partnership and the process of European integration are goals of equal importance and urgency. One of them cannot wait for the other." This is not a policy but an aspiration. It is, alas, a fact that, whatever our hopes, we shall not be able to reinforce the Alliance, or make any progress with the Partnership, until we have solved the outstanding European question. What "Atlantic" institutions, over and above those already existing (such as NATO, OECD, and the NATO Parliamentarians) are imaginable for so long as Europe is divided and the political future, even of the Six, is quite obscure? Do we, or do we not, want Europe to be united on some basis other than that of the simple alliance of sovereign states proposed by General de Gaulle? Are we, or are we not, prepared to accept the formation of a Western European Political Union of any kind without Great Britain?

If those on the Continent who are sincere "Europeans" would give clear answers to those questions, much progress could certainly be made.

GLADWYN

House of Lords

Anti-Semitism

APROPOS of the article "Then and Now" by Malcolm Muggeridge in the April ENCOUNTER.

To quote, "... The English, especially the lower classes, tend to be anti-Semitic." I hope that Mr. Muggeridge was not implying that the "upper classes" were less anti-Semitic, because I can assure him that his statement is very wide of the mark.

My first term at a famous Public School, mixing with the sons of some of Britain's best families, showed me what anti-Semitism really meant. I was the only Jew in the school for more than a year, and spent most of my time enduring the maximum humiliation that could be imposed by a fifteen-year-old mind. "Jew-boy," "kike," and various other endearing terms, carefully learnt from parents and other relatives, were flung at me, and the physical torments were even more unpleasant. So much for the upper classes.

Conversely, during my National Service, as a member of the other ranks, I did not on one single occasion in two years experience any anti-Semitism of any form. I lived with the lowest of Mr. Muggeridge's "lower classes" and found either a complete indifference to my Jewishness or a genuine interest in the basic facts. I think the cross-section with which I came into contact is far more representative than anything Mr. Muggeridge could have experienced. The only military anti-Semite that I met was a Sandhurst-trained captain.

Mr. Muggeridge should try slumming sometime.

NEVILLE DAVIS

London

"Aimez-Vous Goethe?"

MR. D. J. ENRIGHT'S article "Aimez-Vous Goethe?" [ENCOUNTER, April] says a great many things that badly need saying and says them very happily. German literature owes him a good deal, for he is one of the very few English critics who frequently deal with recent German work and who have interesting and illuminating things to say about German literature in general. He is therefore in a good position to say that British Germanists are on the whole thoroughly academic, *i.e.*, uninformative.

There is another side to this, though. It is not easy to get a book about German literature published in this country (ask any publisher), and literary reviews are not noticeably keen on accepting articles about it ("our readers would not be interested"). This is all part of the climate of opinion which Mr. Enright is describing. It is not surprising, therefore, that many British Germanists feel that there is not much interest in their subject in the literary world and therefore resign themselves to plodding on in their academic way (for instance, lecturing to their students about contemporary German literature, since they at least are interested and no one else much seems to be) and publishing what they have to say in professional journals. These, of course, are parish magazines, not read by people interested in Literature with a big L. If you, Sir, and some of your readers, would care to look at *"German Life & Letters"* occasionally

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you would find a good deal of information and lively criticism about German literature, past and present (at least one copy goes to Singapore).

To come a little bit nearer home, your own special number on Germany contains contributions from some thirty people; only two of these are British Germanists—Christopher Middleton and Michael Hamburger—and very good Germanists they are. But they were surely not invited to contribute (verse translations and a review) because they are Germanists but because they are poets (they are good poets too). The British Germanist is in a cleft stick—when he has got something to say he finds that nobody is interested, whereupon he gets scolded for not saying it, or people just assume that he has nothing to say worth hearing when they *are* interested. This is not an implied reproach to Mr. Enright; it simply shows how right his main contention is. If you, Sir, would occasionally give some British Germanists the opportunity to get out of their cleft stick, you would be doing a considerable service; perhaps other journals would follow, and gradually the picture the public has of German literature could be altered for the better.

LEONARD FORSTER

Department of German,
University of Cambridge

"Banality of Evil"

JOSEPH CONRAD seems to have come rather close to anticipating Miss Hannah Arendt's phrase, "banality of evil." In the Author's Note (1926) to *Under Western Eyes* (first published in 1910), Conrad wrote:

> "As to Nikita—nicknamed Necator—he is the perfect flower of the terroristic wilderness. What troubled me most in dealing with him was not his monstrosity but his banality.... The most terrifying reflection (I am speaking now for myself) is that all these people are not the product of the exceptional but of the general—of the normality of their place, and time, and race."

Conrad ends on an appropriate commonplace, endorsing the "truth of the saying that the tiger cannot change his stripes nor the leopard his spots."

HERMAN SINGER

New York City

Film and the Critics

THE STAR CULT, seen by Mr. Alloway [ENCOUNTER, February, 1964] as an important characteristic of the film, has no real bearing on the art form. It was, and is (although now waning, with the maturity of the medium imminent), an extraneous phenomenon arising from the efficacy of film as a form of dissemination, and in fact follows in unbroken succession Victorian idolisation of actresses, with as much relevance to the cinema as this had to the drama. How, for instance, however brilliant his interpretation of Uncle Vanya, could Sir Michael Redgrave be considered a constituent part of Chekhov's art? Consider Garbo—her films now, shown as a consistent body of work, have succeeded through her physical beauty and her ability as an actress, in the interpretation of a character within the confines of a screenplay; not through her inaccessibility, sulks, or disappearances. That the resonance she had with her times still affects without its context, shows the essentially interpretative quality of her contribution.

Similarly, Mr. Alloway's attempt to deny the film its status as an art because of the variety of techniques involved seems superficial. As one could probably analyse Van Gogh in terms of his canvas merchant and the chemist who compounded the bases of his colours, so one might compose fruitless equations of the Jack Cardiff equals William Caxton *genre*. None of this can remove the creative validity of the individual scriptwriter/director's vision—however unlikely a theory this may sound, the actual experience of seeing a film by Bergman (to quote one of Mr. Alloway's rejects) is undeniably unique.

As for the plea to consider films as a mass indistinguishable in quality but punctuated by spasmodic and collective changes in theme and public taste, one could do the same with literature, plotting the relative sales of Hank Jensen and Balzac, Agatha Christie and Dostoevsky. This is, however, the sociologist's realm—the vital task for film criticism is to insist on creative values and practise that discrimination so maligned by Mr. Alloway.

P. J. COLLIER

King's College,
London

"Have the Welsh a Future"

I SUPPOSE the answer to this question is "No" unless, as a nation (if that is what they are), they develop more self-respect and cease to be a sort of motley, nondescript overspill from England. And to dismiss those who protest against this dilution of a people as a fanatic fringe is to decry the efforts of those who are concerned about its future and its language, and less about the preservation of a defunct way of life than Goronwy Rees [March] imagines. Indeed, the leading article of the February issue of *The Welsh Nation* (the English-language publication of the *Plaid Cymru*) tells us that "talk of a 'Welsh way of life' which must be 'preserved' is for the most part meaningless." It goes on to describe much of this "way of life" as a heritage as "junk," though including, "like a treasure on a scrap-heap, the Welsh language."

Goronwy Rees seems to think that the only attitude which counts is the *hiraeth* for a non-existent romanticised past symbolised by the *Mabinogion*. Such *hiraeth* is, I should say, more noticeable in the Scots, whose romanticisation of the past far exceeds anything Welsh. The writer mentions Saunders Lewis as one who invites this kind of imaginative leap; but has he not read some of Lewis's plays—*Brâd*, for example, and *'Gymerwch chi Cigaret?*, which are about as modern as Sartre's *Les Mains Sales* and *Les Sequestrés d'Altona*? I should have thought that the work of one of the most popular of Welsh novelists to-day, Islwyn Ffowc Elis, is about as far removed from Daniel

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Owen, for example, as any contemporary English novelist's is from Dickens or Hardy. Yet it is "Welsh" enough.

The one question which Goronwy Rees does not answer (indeed, he does not propound it) is why the Celtic peoples alone think it not worth while to speak their own language and preserve their own nationhood—things which are generally considered admirable when cherished by other nations. Nobody disparages the Finns for speaking Finnish, though they had no national independence for a long period. Hungarians and Czechs, presumably, retained their national awareness expressed in language, despite having lived for long under Germanic hegemony. Why is it that the Celtic peoples have lost their resistance to nationally dysgenic forces? Why not the Danes, the Norwegians, and all the rest? In these cases there is no need to justify the language. The Finns do not all have to become imitation Finns or Russians, though no doubt educated Finns speak both languages. It is the Celts, and the Welsh in particular, who are expected to produce some reason for remaining Welsh, and those who are most concerned that they should do so are represented as oddities.

I must confess that I cannot quite understand Goronwy Rees' position. He describes the Eisteddfod as "grotesque." What is grotesque about it? Granted that the Gorsedd is a lot of neo-medieval nonsense. But that is not the whole of the Eisteddfod. As a cultural enterprise it is a welcome alternative to, say, the hysterogenic Beatlemania which appears now to be the typical fruit of Anglo-Saxon "culture." Nor do I quite see why the distinction between rural and industrial Wales should be responsible for a permanent dichotomy of culture. Some decades ago the "Welsh way of life" of that time was as evident in the south as in the north, if choirs, chapels, concern for education, etc., were its expressions. Is there not the same distinction in any industrialised nation? Why should it make for cultural dissolution in Wales more than anywhere else?

I CANNOT BUT feel that situation described by Goronwy Rees indicates (as it does) a certain spinelessness in the Celts and a curious indifference to what, in other peoples, is considered essential to national survival as cultural units. Does not this call for some explanation? Proximity to England and English infiltration are not sufficient to account for it. Certainly, as was pointed out recently in *Barn* (a review which Goronwy Rees should read unless he does so already), while "Welsh" schools (primary and secondary) are being inaugurated in non-Welsh-speaking areas, it is odd that, in areas where children may be 90 per cent Welsh-speaking, the medium of instruction is English, which tends to deprive Welsh of the status which it should have. I can only conclude that the truth of much of Goronwy Rees' article, if it comes to the notice of many non-Welsh-speaking Welshmen, should make them ask themselves why they are as they are, and if they ever heard of any other people but the Celts who cannot speak their own tongue.

GERAINT VAUGHAN JONES

Glasgow

AUTHORS

Robert Graves *writes*: "I felt rather shaken when asked to deliver the annual Oration of the London School of Economics and Political Science; and at first suspected a leg-pull. But presently, realising that no student in his senses would dare forge Sir Sydney Caine's name to the official invitation, I concluded that the Committee must have heard of my economic and political naïveté, and of my dedication to a poetic way of thought, and wanted perhaps to hear me enlarge on the text 'If there's no money in poetry, neither is there poetry in money.' I admit having once used this comeback on a businessman who was kindly urging me to write a best-seller, rather than poems which no ordinary mortal (meaning himself) could understand. Yet poets need never have empty purses.... This may sound somewhat starry-eyed, like the Biblical injunction to trust in the Lord, for He will provide...."

Two Women is a story which has its foundation in fact. **Tibor Déry** is the world-famous Hungarian writer, who was imprisoned by the Kadar régime after 1956, and released three years ago. He now lives and works in Budapest....

Lewis Nkosi is a young South African writer now living in London. Before he left Johannesburg he was on the staff of the *Golden City Post*. He spent a year at Harvard as a Neiman Fellow in Journalism....

Philip French works for the B.B.C. and has written about films for the *Observer*....

Christopher Booker founded and was until recently one of the Editors of *Private Eye*....

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Fellini on set
(8½, 1963)

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2

1 La Dolce Vita *(1960)*

2 I Vitelloni *(1953)*

3 La Strada *(1954)*

4 8½ *(1963)*

4

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The White Sheikh
(1952)

$8\frac{1}{2}$ *(1963)*

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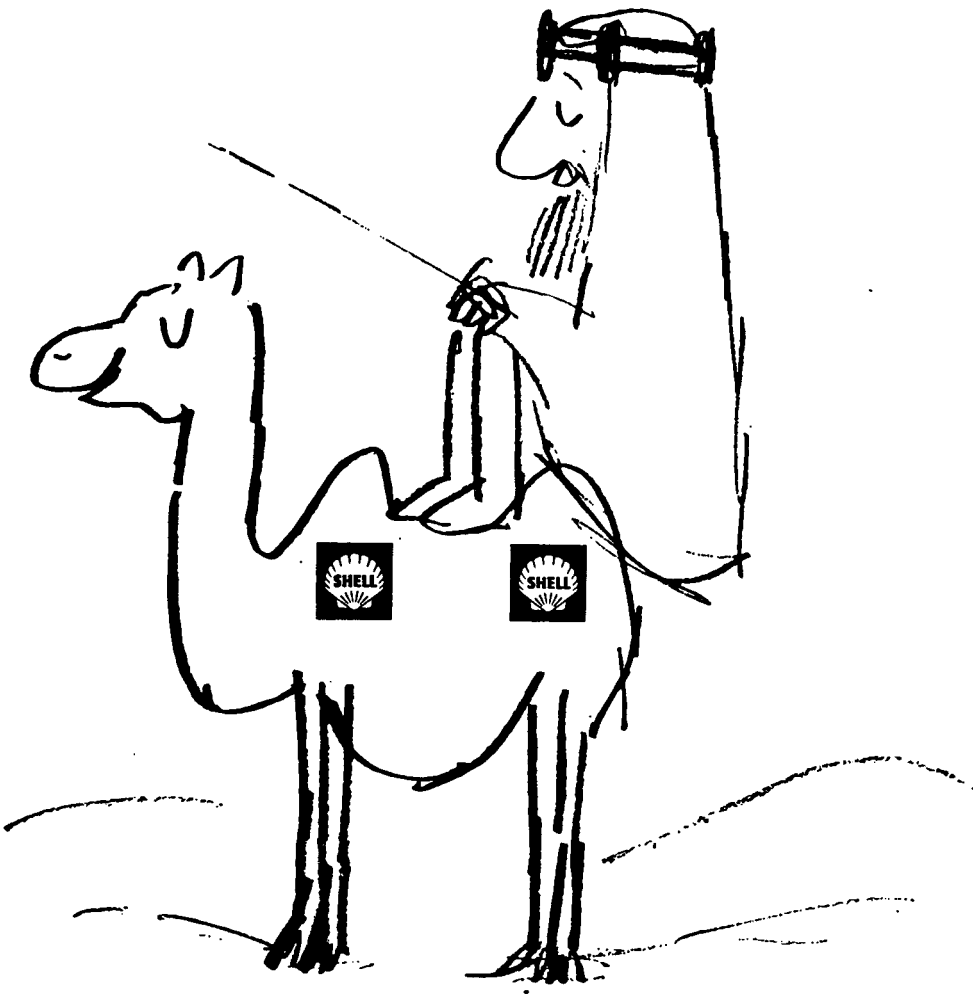

Shell Songs of Araby

My patch of desert, said the Sheik,
Is doing rather well;
My camel kicked a bump last week—
That bump was full of Shell.

GO WELL SHELL GO SHELL

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